

## **Existing and planned measures on the promotion of equality for ethnic minorities**

### **Medical and Health**

It is the Government's policy to promote and protect the health of our community and the public healthcare services are available to all members of the public regardless of their race and ethnic origins. Specific measures have been put in place to facilitate ethnic minorities to access the public healthcare services.

Services  
Concerned

- The public healthcare services in Hong Kong cover a range of services from health promotion, disease prevention, to primary, secondary and tertiary care. The services to patients are mainly provided by the Hospital Authority (HA), which is a statutory body established under the Hospital Authority Ordinance (Cap.113) to manage all public hospitals in Hong Kong. HA is providing medical treatment and rehabilitation services to the public through hospitals, general outpatient clinics, specialist outpatient clinics and outreaching services. Meanwhile, the Department of Health (DH) is the Government's health adviser and agency to execute health policies and statutory functions. It also provides a range of services on health promotion, disease prevention, cure and rehabilitation.

Existing  
Measures

#### Interpretation services at public hospitals/clinics:

- Interpretation services are available in public hospitals/clinics under the management of HA mainly through a service contractor, part-time court interpreters, volunteers and consulate offices. The interpretation service provided by the service contractor covers 18 languages<sup>1</sup> of ethnic minorities (namely Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Nepali, Bahasa Indonesia, Vietnamese, Thai, Korean, Bengali, Japanese, Tagalog (Philippines), German, French, Sinhala, Spanish, Arabic, Malay and

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<sup>1</sup> The service contractor of HA provides interpretation services in 19 languages, including 18 languages for ethnic minorities and sign language.

Portuguese). Interpretation services are also available in DH's health centres/clinics mainly through the Hong Kong Christian Service's Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents (CHEER), a service contractor<sup>2</sup>, and part-time interpreters from the Judiciary. The interpretation service provided by the CHEER covers seven languages, namely Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi, Tagalog, Thai and Urdu, whereas the service contractor provides interpretation service in 11 more languages (namely Arabic, Bengali, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Portuguese, Sinhala, Spanish, and Vietnamese) in addition to the seven languages covered by the CHEER. Part-time interpreters from the Judiciary provide interpretation services in more than 50 different languages and dialects. The service is provided on the site or through telephone depending on the needs in each case.

- For scheduled service (such as medical appointment at the specialist and general outpatient clinics of HA and services of DH), patients may request the hospital/clinic/health centre concerned to arrange interpretation service in advance. For non-scheduled service (such as hospital admission during emergency), clinical staff will arrange for the provision of interpretation service where necessary or upon request of patients. Both CHEER and service contractor of DH also provide telephone interpretation.
- To enhance the standard of interpretation services provided at public hospitals/clinics, both HA and DH have arranged with their service contractors to provide training to the interpreters of the service contractors to equip them with general knowledge on hospital and health clinic/centre operation, medical terminologies and infection control.

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<sup>2</sup> DH has engaged a service contractor for providing interpretation service for one year starting from 1 September 2017.

### Other measures to facilitate communication:

- To facilitate communication with the ethnic minorities in public hospitals/clinics, HA has provided its frontline staff with response cue cards, patient information sheets and consent forms, etc in a number of ethnic minority languages to enhance the communication between the clinical staff and patients, to facilitate the registration and provision of services. These documents contain information of some common illnesses (e.g. headache, chest pain and fever, etc), treatment procedures (e.g. blood transfusion, radiation safety, etc) and details of HA's service (e.g. fees and charges, triage category in the Accident and Emergency Department). HA has currently produced cue cards, patient information sheets and consent forms in 18 languages, namely Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Russian, Arabic, Nepalese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Thai, Tagalog (Philippines), Japanese, Hindi, Korean, German, Portuguese, Spanish and French. Cue cards in 5 ethnic minority languages are also used for interviewing ethnic minority clients during child health, antenatal and postnatal visits to maternal and child health clinics under DH.
- HA has been organizing seminars or training courses on ethnic minorities and anti-discrimination ordinances at cluster level according to their service need. The HA e-Learning Centre is offering an e-courseware on communication with ethnic minorities, knowledge about the culture of ethnic minorities and proper arrangement of hospital interpretation service. Participants to these trainings include frontline staff working at enquiry counters of hospitals and clinics, nurses and clerical staff. Besides, relevant information on ethnic minorities is incorporated in the orientation program for new staff. In the past 3 financial years, the total number of participants for the said trainings and e-courseware is over 9,076. DH provides training on equal opportunities for employees to raise their awareness and understanding of the issue. In 2016/17, a total of 479 DH employees have attended seminars on equal opportunities in workplace. Relevant information and training materials on equal

opportunities and cultural sensitivity at workplace are also available in the departmental intranet for reference by staff.

- The health education resources produced by DH to the public are generally in both Chinese and English. Information in other languages, including some minority languages such as Hindi, Nepali, Urdu, Thai, Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog, etc., is also provided for a number of selected health topics and DH's services, such as child health and parenting, home safety, nutrition, family planning, antenatal and postnatal care, communicable disease prevention, HIV antibody test, etc.
- The HA launched a dedicated website for ethnic minorities in mid-2015, providing the essential information given on the current HA website in five languages, including Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi (Indian), Punjabi (Pakistani) and Urdu. The website contains information about the HA and the accident and emergency service, as well as the addresses, telephone numbers and consultation hours of general out-patient clinics. Revamp of the website was completed in February 2017 to make the content available in three more languages, namely Thai, Bahasa Indonesia and Tagalog, so that more ethnic groups can better understand the information provided by the HA.

Assessment of  
Future Work and  
Existing  
Measures

- There were around 12,000 cases where interpretation services were provided to ethnic minorities in public hospitals/clinics under the management of HA during the period from April 2016 to March 2017. The feedback from service users indicates that the services are satisfactory. HA will continue to monitor the utilization and users' feedback on the interpretation services.
- Interpretation services were provided in DH's health centres/clinics for a total of 2 557 and 206 cases by the CHEER and part-time interpreters respectively since April 2012 (as of March 2017).

Additional  
Measures Taken  
/ To be Taken

- To meet the needs of ethnic minorities, special diet such as Halal food is available in HA hospitals.
- The HA's Smart Patient Website (SPW) is a one-stop electronic platform with information on disease management and community resources to empower patients with chronic diseases and their carers. To cater for the needs of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, the HA has set up a disease information webpage on SPW in 2016 which provides information on cancer, chronic diseases and other diseases in eight languages, namely Thai, Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog, Nepali, Punjabi (Indian), Punjabi (Pakistani), Hindi and Urdu. Examples of disease information include Coronary Heart Diseases, Chronic Renal Failure, Diabetes Mellitus, Dementia, Hypertension, Stroke, various Cancers and Mental Diseases. The HA will continue to enhance the Smart Patient Website to improve the disease management and self-care abilities of ethnic minorities.
- HA and DH will continue their efforts to facilitate the access of ethnic minorities to public healthcare services and will enhance the supporting measures for the ethnic minorities as necessary.

### **Enquiries / Complaints**

If members of the public have any enquiries / complaints relating to racial equality issues, they can contact –

*For matters related to HA*

General Enquiry  
Hospital Authority  
Telephone : 2300 6555  
E-mail: enquiry@ha.org.hk

*For matters related to DH*

Client Relations Unit  
Department of Health  
Telephone : 2836 0077  
Email: enquiries@dh.gov.hk

**Food and Health Bureau  
Department of Health  
Hospital Authority  
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