

## **Existing and planned measures on the promotion of racial equality**

### **Hospital Authority**

The Hospital Authority (HA) is a statutory body established under the Hospital Authority Ordinance (Cap. 113), which manages all public hospitals in Hong Kong. The HA provides medical treatment and rehabilitation services to the public through hospitals, general outpatient clinics, specialist outpatient clinics and outreaching services.

#### Services Concerned

- The HA manages 43 public hospitals and institutions, 49 Specialist Out-patient Clinics and 73 General Out-patient Clinics. These are organised into seven hospital clusters based on locations.
- Hospital clusters ensure that patients receive a continuum of high quality care within the same geographical setting and throughout their episode of illness – from acute phase through convalescence, rehabilitation, and community after-care. This is achieved by rationalising operations of the hospitals within each cluster, so that a comprehensive and complementary range of services can be delivered to the community.
- It is the HA’s policy to promote and protect the health of our community. 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.

#### Existing Measures

- To cater for the needs of users of diverse race, interpretation services are arranged in public hospitals and clinics of the HA through service contractor, freelance interpreter for the Judiciary Administration and consulate offices. The interpretation service provided by the service contractor covers 17 languages<sup>1</sup>(namely Arabic, Bahasa Indonesia, Bengali, French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Nepali, Punjabi, Pushto, Sinhala,

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<sup>1</sup> The service contractor of HA also provides sign language interpretation services.

Spanish, Tagalog (Philippines), Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese.

- For scheduled service (such as medical appointment at the specialist and general outpatient clinics), patients may request the hospital and clinic concerned to arrange interpretation service in advance. For non-scheduled service (such as hospital admission during emergency), hospital staff will arrange immediate provision of telephone/ video-call interpretation services or on-site interpretation service as soon as possible, if necessary.
- To ensure the quality of interpretation service at public hospitals and clinics, the HA provides through its interpretation service contractor training for all interpreters on general knowledge about the operation of hospitals and clinics, medical terminologies and infection control, so that interpreters can provide interpretation services for users of diverse race in a prompt and accurate manner. Multilingual posters have also been posted at conspicuous locations of public hospitals and clinics (e.g. enquiry and registration counters) for promoting and helping users of diverse race understand how to request for interpretation services.
- The HA has guidelines in place on the arrangement of interpretation services. HA staff will contact the contractor's 24 hours call centre to arrange on-site or telephone interpretation services according to the needs of individual case or upon requests of patients.
- To facilitate communication with the users of diverse race in public hospitals and clinics, the HA has provided its frontline staff with response cue cards, disease information sheets and patient consent forms, etc. in a number of languages to enhance the communication between the hospital and clinic staff and patients, and to facilitate the registration and provision of services. These documents contain information of some common illnesses (e.g. headache, chest pain and fever), treatment procedures (e.g. blood transfusion, radiation safety) and details of the HA's service (e.g. fees and charges, triage category in the

Accident and Emergency Department). The HA provides response cue cards, disease information sheets and patient consent forms in 18 languages, namely Arabic, Bengali, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Malaysian, Nepalese, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog(Philippines), Thai, Urdu and Vietnamese.

- The HA has been organising seminars or training courses on the culture of users of diverse race and anti-discrimination ordinances at cluster level according to their service need. The HA e-Learning Centre offers an e-courseware on communication with users of diverse race, including knowledge about their culture and proper arrangement of hospital interpretation service. Participants of these training courses include frontline staff working at enquiry counters of hospitals and clinics, nurses and clerical staff. Besides, relevant information on users of diverse race is incorporated in the orientation programme for new staff. During the period from April 2019 to March 2022, the total number of attendances of the said trainings and e-courseware is over 20 500.

#### Assessment of Future Work

- There were around 7 261 and 7 408 cases where interpretation services were provided to users of diverse race in public hospitals and clinics under the management of the HA during the period from April 2020 to March 2021 and April 2021 to March 2022, respectively. The feedback from service users indicates that the services are satisfactory. The HA will continue to monitor the utilization and users' feedback on the interpretation services.

#### Additional Measures Taken/To Be Taken

- To meet the service needs of users of diverse race, special diet such as Halal food is available in the HA hospitals.
- The HA launched a dedicated website for users of diverse race 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, Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog and Thai, so that more ethnic groups can better understand the information provided by the HA. In 2020, the HA added a designated page to the website providing information on the special service arrangements of public hospitals and clinics under the situation of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the eight aforementioned languages.

- The HA's Smart Patient Website (SPW) is a one-stop electronic platform with information on disease management and community resources to empower patients and their carers. To cater for the needs of users of diverse race 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 Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi (Indian), Punjabi (Pakistani), Tagalog, Thai and Urdu. Examples of disease information include Coronary Heart Diseases, Chronic Renal Failure, Diabetes Mellitus, Dementia, Hypertension, Stroke, various Cancers and Mental Diseases. Further, information to equip patients with caring tips such as physiotherapy and home exercises for stroke patients, tips on injecting Insulin have been included. The HA will continue to enhance the SPW to improve the disease management and self-care abilities of users of diverse race.
- Since March 2019, interpretation requests and preferred languages of users of diverse race at Specialist Out-patient Clinics have been captured in the Patient Master Index, so as to enhance staff awareness of patients' needs and streamline the procedures of arranging interpretation services for patients.

- The HA will continue their efforts to facilitate the access of users of diverse race to public healthcare services and will enhance the relevant supporting measures as appropriate.

For enquiries concerning the existing and planned measures on the promotion of racial equality, please contact Hospital Authority Head Office via the following channels -

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