

**Question on Supply of North Lantau Hospital Beds**  
**(Paper IDC 32/2014 )**

**Written reply of Food and Health Bureau**

The healthcare system of Hong Kong runs on a dual-track basis encompassing both public and private elements. The Government will continue to maintain this dual-track system, which has served us well, and ensure that it can develop in a balanced and sustainable manner.

The public healthcare sector is the cornerstone of Hong Kong's healthcare system and the safety net for all. The Government will uphold its firm commitment to the public healthcare sector and continue with its investment in strengthening the public healthcare services to meet the ever increasing healthcare needs. Regarding medical infrastructural facilities, we will allocate resources to construct, expand/redevelop and enhance existing public healthcare facilities to improve the service quality and increase the overall service capacity.

According to information of the Hospital Authority (HA) and Department of Health, the latest number of hospital beds in Hong Kong is presented in the table below –

<b>Type</b>	<b>No. of beds</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Public hospitals	27,440	As at end March 2014
Private hospitals	3,882	As at end December 2013
Nursing homes <sup>1</sup>	4,617	As at end December 2013
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,939</b>	Including nursing homes

To cater for the healthcare needs of residents in Lantau Island, the North Lantau Hospital (NLTH) (Phase 1) with 180 beds was commissioned by phases in September 2013. Starting from early this year, the opening hours of the NLTH's Accident and Emergency Department has also been extended from 8 hours to 16 hours daily.

To meet the community's healthcare needs, HA would continue

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<sup>1</sup> Those registered under Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Maternity Homes Registration Ordinance (Cap. 165).

to closely review and project the demand of medical services in various districts, including Lantau Island, and plan for the provision of various healthcare facilities. In planning for the provision of public healthcare services and facilities, including the number and types of beds, HA will take into account various factors, including: forecast of demand for medical services of the district according to population growth and demographic changes; growth rate and forecast of service needs for specialist services; cross-cluster service utilization; and possible changes in the utilisation patterns, etc.. For Lantau Island, NLTH will be a crucial part of the overall HA response plan in disasters and contingencies in North Lantau which covers the Hong Kong International Airport, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge and other major nearby tourist facilities. In view of its projected population growth, we plan to reserve the adjoining site for future expansion of NLTH.

Apart from planning for public healthcare facilities, the private healthcare sector is an indispensable part of Hong Kong's dual-track healthcare system. One of our healthcare reform initiatives is to promote and facilitate private healthcare development. This will help redress the imbalance between the public and private sectors in hospital services, and increase the overall capacity of the healthcare system in Hong Kong to cope with the rising service demand. We also hope that, through the continuing development of private hospitals, more choices of quality healthcare services can be provided to the public.

Apart from the Gleneagles Hospital which is expected to commission in 2017 with a capacity of 500 beds and is being constructed at a site in Wong Chug Hang disposed of through open tender in March 2013, there are other proposals to develop new private hospitals by various organisations which will increase the overall service capacity of the private sector. We are considering these various proposals and will assess the needs of the community in formulating the overall direction of the development of private hospitals.

25 April 2014