

PRESS RELEASE 新聞稿

Hospital Authority Building, 147B, Argyle Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Monday, 5 January 2009

HA Chief Executive's Statement on CMC Report

The Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority (HA), Mr Shane Solomon, today (Monday 5 January) made the following statement on the Investigation Report of Caritas Medical Centre (CMC):

HA releases the Report on Caritas Medical Centre (CMC) patient incident that occurred two weeks ago.

The Report identifies a number of inadequacies in the handling of the incident. These inadequacies occurred at the initial inquiry counter, the Accident and Emergency Department, and in the subsequent public handling of the incident.

I accept the Report as a factual account of what happened around the time of the event and the operational policies in place at the time of the incident.

I welcome the remedial actions that the CMC will take to avoid such incidents happening both within the non-clinical areas of the hospital and in the vicinity of the hospital.

The Report is an internal investigation report of management of CMC. It cannot deal with the matter of responsibilities amongst the various parties involved, including staff and management.

So HA will establish a high level Special Review Committee comprised of Board Members to assess responsibilities for the incident and determine corresponding human resources actions as required. The Special Review Committee will be chaired by myself as the Chief Executive of HA, and include the following members:

- Dr Anthony Ho (Chairman, HA Human Resources Committee)
- Professor Fok Tai-fai (Chairman, HA Medical Services Development Committee)
- Professor David Cheung (Chairman, CMC Hospital Governing Committee)

The Special Review Committee will determine any necessary human resources actions within six weeks.

The incident holds lessons for the rest of HA that requires some further actions.

First, a set of “General principles for handling persons requiring emergency medical assistance in the vicinity of HA hospitals and clinics” has been promulgated today. Each hospital and clinic is required to have a locally customized and flexible response plan to deal with emergencies in the vicinity. The response plan must be consistent with our first priority being to save people’s lives and all HA staff offering all reasonable assistance in an emergency.

Second, HA recognizes that these response plans will require special equipment. At present HA has 1,600 defibrillators, however these are not easily transportable nor usable by laymen. So HA hospitals, clinics, and key reception areas will be provided with portable Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). Currently HA has about 25 such pieces of equipment. Preliminary estimates are that HA will require an additional 200 AEDs, at a cost of around \$4 million to cover.

The CMC Report is open about the details of the incident, accepts that there are inadequacies, and proposes a series of actions to prevent this in the future.

The Special Review Committee will look further into apportioning responsibility between those involved, and what human resources measures may be necessary. The initiatives across HA will prepare all public hospitals for any such future unfortunate incident, whether in the general public areas of the hospital or in the vicinity of the hospital.

In closing, can I say that Caritas Medical Centre has a long and fine record of serving the community with care and compassion. This incident does not reflect the true spirit of CMC whose front-line staff are committed to the service of patients.

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