

**Information provided in response to letter of 5 December 2003 from
the Clerk to Select Committee to inquire into the handling of
the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak by
the Government and the Hospital Authority**

**13. Working relationship between the HWFB Task Force and the HA's
Daily SARS Round Up Meeting.**

A1(C)

Please refer to ~~SC04-15P-EY~~ *Paper on Health, Welfare and Food Bureau's Task Force, Chief Executive's Steering Committee and Interdepartmental Action Coordinating Committee*, which sets out, inter alia, the operations of the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB) Task Force.

Hospital Authority's (HA) Daily SARS Round Up Meeting mainly concentrated on hospital management issues. It was chaired by the Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority (CE/HA) (and by the Deputized CE/HA and Chairman of the HA after CE/HA was hospitalized) and attended by all Cluster Chief Executives and many Head Office and Cluster executives responsible for hospital management matters. The Meeting reported on daily patient intakes, SARS patient conditions, utilization of Intensive Care Unit facilities in each hospital, and the treatment results and guidelines. It also discussed hospital management issues such as service redistribution, bed utilization, staff deployment, personal protective equipment acquisition, hospital infection control, hospital environmental conditions, provision of facilities and accommodation for front-line staff and external and internal communication.

The focus and responsibilities of the HWFB Task Force and HA Daily Meeting were different. However, as there was common membership on the two committees, there were close exchanges of information relevant to the monitor and control of the outbreak.

14. The time when the Government started to consider adding SARS to the list of infectious diseases specified in First Schedule to the Quarantine and Prevention of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 141) and details of the drafting instructions, if any, given to the Department of Justice and the date when these instructions were given.

E3(b)-4

The two papers ~~SC-01-16P-EY~~ *Legal backing for public health measures implemented to combat SARS* and ~~SC-01-36P-EY~~ *Public Health Legislation on Infectious Disease Control in Hong Kong* are relevant.

E3(c)-4

- 2 -

At the 5th meeting of the HWFB Task Force held on 26 March 2003, the Director of Health recommended a basket of public health measures, including the proposal of adding of SARS to Schedule 1 of Cap. 141 as soon as practicable. HWFB subsequently coordinated the required action, liaised with the Department of Justice (DoJ) and the Department of Health (DH) to follow up on the legislative process. The relevant amendment orders were gazetted on 27 March 2003 and took effect immediately.

15. The time when the Government started to consider empowering DH to authorize persons to take body temperature of persons arriving in or leaving Hong Kong and to prohibit persons who have been exposed to the risk of SARS from leaving Hong Kong and details of the drafting instructions, if any, given to the Department of Justice and the date when these instructions were given.

E3(b)-4

The two papers ~~SC-01-16P-EX~~ *Legal backing for public health measures implemented to combat SARS* and ~~SC-01-36P-EX~~ *Public Health Legislation on Infectious Disease Control in Hong Kong* are relevant.

E3(c)-4

At the Senior Officials Meeting held on 4 April 2003, the meeting considered and agreed that considerations should be given to restricting the right of the infected patients and their close contacts to leave Hong Kong. A set of drafting instructions was issued by HWFB to DoJ on 7 April 2003 for the purpose of providing by regulation under Cap. 141 for imposing restriction on the close contacts of persons infected with SARS from travelling outside Hong Kong during a period specified by the Director of Health unless with his express permission in writing. The scope of this amendment regulation was subsequently expanded to require passengers to undergo body temperature checks and to restrict outbound travel of at-risk persons.

The *Prevention of the Spread of Infectious Diseases (Amendment) Regulation 2003* was formally made by the Chief Executive in Council on 15 April 2003 to step up control measures for the purpose of preventing the disease from being exported from or imported into Hong Kong. The Amendment Regulation was gazetted on 17 April 2003.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
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