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The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust
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Press Release

Launch Ceremony and Press Conference for “Jockey Club End-of-Life Community Care Project”

January 8, 2016

In recent years, public concern and demand on end-of-life care have been growing drastically around the world. As estimated by the World Health Organization (WHO), a total of 20 million patients need end-of-life care services (EoLC services) every year. WHO's governing body the World Health Assembly has also requested its member countries to be prepared for this challenge at the May 2014 meeting. The number of deaths was 45,710 in Hong Kong (in 2014). Most of them died of chronic and/or advancing diseases. Coupled with the rapid expansion of the elderly population, it is estimated that more than one-third of the total population will be aged 65 or above in Hong Kong by 2050. The overwhelming demand on EoLC services in the near future is foreseeable.

EoLC services for patients with terminal illness have been formally started in Hong Kong since 1982. The services are mainly provided by 16 hospitals under the Hospital Authority. Until today, more than 90% of deaths happen in hospitals in Hong Kong. The issues of dying at home and end-of-life care in the community have drawn much attention from the public. Hong Kong was placed at 22nd with much room for improvement in comparing with our neighbouring cities, especially on the areas of “community engagement” and “public awareness” on the 2015 Quality of Death Index released by The Economist Intelligence Unit in October last year,. How to enhance EoLC services and to provide comprehensive community support to patients and families at end stage of life becomes an important social concern.

In view of the growing demand for EoLC services in the community, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust supported the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Hong Kong (HKU), Jockey Club Institute of Ageing of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), and five non-governmental organizations (NGOs), namely, Hong Kong Association of Gerontology, Haven of Hope Christian Service, The Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation, St. James' Settlement and S.K.H. Holy Carpenter Church District Elderly Community Centre, by approving HK\$131 million to launch a three-year initiative entitled “Jockey Club End-of-Life Community Care Project” (JCECC). With a multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional and cross-sectoral collaboration and innovative service models, JCECC aims at improving the quality of EoLC, enhancing the capacity of service providers, as well as raising public awareness to provide holistic support to end-of-life patients and their families, either in elderly homes or at patients' own homes (For details, please refer to the appendix).

The officiating guests in the launch ceremony included: Dr. Ko Wing-man, BBS, JP, Secretary for Food and Health, Food and Health Bureau, HKSAR Government, Dr. Eric Li Ka-cheung, GBS, OBE, JP, Steward of The Hong Kong Jockey Club, and Professor Peter Mathieson, President and Vice-Chancellor of HKU. Other invited guests who attended the ceremony to support the launch

of JCECC Project included JCECC Project collaborators, government departments, Hospital Authority, and NGOs in the medical, health, and social welfare sectors.

“The aim of the Jockey Club End-of-Life Community Care Project is to improve the quality of end-of-life care, enhance the capacity of service providers, and raise public awareness of this issue,” The Hong Kong Jockey Club Steward Dr. Eric Li Ka Cheung explained. “In this way our senior citizens can make informed choices of care options and enjoy an improved quality of life at their last stage.”

Professor Cecilia Chan, Professor, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences, HKU & Project Co-director said, “The JCECC is an integrative professional and public education project with multi-disciplinary collaborations to empower the community to ensure that family members and persons at their end-of-life can live their life to the fullest, with dignity and quality. The overall goal is “Live with quality, depart with dignity, and bereave with peace of mind””.

Dr. Edward Leung, President, Hong Kong Association of Gerontology noted that there is a high need of elderly resident of Residential Care Home for Elders in Hong Kong for end of life, and a good end of life care in Residential Care Home for Elders reflects quality of care in residential homes. Dr. Leung said, “The Project will provide training and capacity building in aged homes. It will empower residents, family and aged home staff on end of life decision making.”

“The hospital is the last journey for the majority of patients in the last stage of life. Through promoting mindset change of health and social care professionals and strengthening current systems of end of life care in hospitals, this capacity building project hopes to achieve long lasting improvements in quality of end of life care for patients.” said Professor Jean Woo, Director, CUHK Jockey Club Institute of Ageing.

JCECC Project will be formally started in January 2016. To know more about the services of the Project, please make enquiry with the individual organizers of the services.

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