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Press Release

Jockey Club End-of-Life Community Care Project marks new milestone in Hong Kong community end-of-life care

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In view of the rapidly ageing population and the growing demand for end-of-life care (EoLC) services in the community due to the escalated number of elderly suffering from terminal illness, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust launched the “Jockey Club End-of-Life Community Care Project” (JCECC) in 2016 and provided professional trainings, offered diversified EoLC service to the stakeholders in end-of-life care and organised public education activities. JCECC has today unveiled the project’s achievements in the past 3 years and announced the kick-off of second phase with additional funding of HK\$124 million from The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, which ad up to a total funding of over HK\$255 million, aiming to enhance the connection between current social and medical interfaces to offer an addition service option for end-of-life care in Hong Kong.

Dr. Amy Chow, Associate Professor of Department of Social Work and Social Administration, Faculty of Social Sciences, HKU & Project Director of JCECC, illustrated that JCECC, since its project launch, has already offered capacity enhancement training to over 10,000 healthcare professional in hospital and community. About 5,000 elderly with terminal illness staying at home and their family members as well as elderly in 36 Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (RCHE) have been receiving the Project’s EoLC services. 586 EoLC volunteers have been trained to provide caring support in the community. More than 350,000 people were able to obtain EoLC knowledge through the multimedia materials produced by the Project.

Specifically, the Project’s service beneficiary in the community agreed that their condition with discomforted symptoms were reduced by 18% after receiving JCECC services, while the practical and psychosocial support offered by the project’s NGO partners were able to relieve the anxiety of end-of-life patients and their family members. More than half of patient’s practical concerns on daily care was resolved. Also, it has been well evidenced that the JCECC community EoLC service has effectively lightened the pressure generated from end-of-life patients to current medical system. In comparing with the death cases in hospitals due to similar terminal illness in 2015, the average hospital bed day of patients receiving JCECC’s EoLC service during their last 6 months of life dropped 4.87 days, i.e. 12.5%. By estimation, it can release 3,874 hospital beds to other patients in needs based on the figure of 777 end-of-life patients served by the Project in the past 3 years. The utilization of intensive care unit and accident and emergency services will also be de-escalated correspondingly.

For RCHEs, among the 37 residents who participated in the Project, the average number of hospitalization days in the first three months of death decreased by around 13 days, and the number of emergency room usage dropped by nearly 20%. In addition, the Project also trained more than 2,200 residential care homes for the elderly. There is an increase of their willingness, ability and resilience to provide end-of-life care services.

Ms. Cheng, representative of End-of-Life Care in Residential Care Homes for the Elderly Project of Hong Kong Association of Gerontology and Ms. Chiu, the family member of service recipient in RCHE also shared the experience in the Project's innovative EoLC service. They all agreed that supports to patients and family members in RCHE was largely enhanced in light of JCECC's holistic support. Ms. Law, representative of "Life Rainbow" End-of-Life Care Services of The Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation and Nan Ying, family member of service recipient in the community also reaffirmed the role of JCECC in optimizing the EoLC services in the community. The service provided by the Project was extremely helpful and the general public will be more likely to accept the service in future because of this pilot service.

Nevertheless, JCECC's public education activities were successful in nurturing a much open environment in the society, not only to break the taboo of talking about death but also to raise public awareness on EoLC matters in the community. The Project conducted a three-phase community-wide survey on EoLC in Hong Kong from 2016 to 2018, with the assistance of the HKU Social Sciences Research Centre. The survey collected data from 4,638 Hong Kong citizens and the results showed that public awareness on EoLC is increasing. Number of respondents with understanding on EoLC concept raised from 30% in 2016 to 39% in 2018, so as to the acceptance of EoLC service that more than three quarter of respondents would consider quality of life more important than extension of life.

To further advocate community EoLC, The Trust continues to support JCECC and the Project partners include the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Hong Kong, The Chinese University of Hong Kong Jockey Club Institute of Ageing, 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. With integration of experience gained from the EoLC service provision in the past 3 years, JCECC further consolidates the service framework and co-offers the 2.0 service together with NGO partners, namely "Integrated Community EoLC Support Teams (ICESTs), with an emphasis on assessment of individual needs and tailor-made of practical and psychosocial supports to end-of-life patients in the community. The coverage of RCHEs will increase from 36 to 48 in order to empower more healthcare professionals in RCHEs to deliver high quality of EoLC. Capacity enhancement trainings in blending learning mode including online learning to small group learning will also be offered to healthcare professionals, social service workers and volunteers as well as family carers. Public education campaign will be continued to enlighten the public's understanding on EoLC. (Please refer to attached leaflet for details).

At the launch ceremony held at The University of Hong Kong today, Dr Law Chi-kwong, Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Labour and Welfare Bureau, HKSAR, Dr. Eric Li Ka Cheung, Steward of The Hong Kong Jockey Club and Professor William Hayward, Dean of Social Sciences of The University of Hong Kong officially kicked-off the Phase II of JCECC.

"Over the past three years, the project has benefited more than 5,000 patients and their family members with palliative care and psychosocial and spiritual support, enabling them to make informed choices of care options," he noted. "The project has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from its various stakeholders, who have noted competency improvements and positive impacts." Dr. Eric Li Ka Cheung explained.

Dr Law Chi-kwong said, “Phase 1 of this most meaningful project began three years back in 2016. Since then, ‘Jockey Club End of Life Community Care’ has benefited many elderly and patients suffering from terminal illness, by providing them with a comprehensive range of life caring services. It is thus gratifying to know that the Jockey Club Charitable Trust has committed to support this project for another 3 years, until 2021. Their continued support could definitely enable service providers to enhance their services, thereby providing even more caring services for more of those in need.”

The services of JCECC Project Phase II has already been rolled out from January 2019. To know more about the services of the Project, please make enquiry with the individual organisers of the services.

For media enquiries, please contact

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