

Commission needed to review handling of mental health issues

Over the past five years, the government has worked hard to expand its mental health services to meet public demand for early detection and treatment, rehabilitation, and community support, as well as long-term treatment and care for those who need it.

For example, in 2011-12, the Hospital Authority expanded its professional team of health-care practitioners in various disciplines for early identification, assessment and treatment services for children suffering from autism and hyperactivity. In 2013-14, more than 208,000 people with mental health problems were treated by the authority's psychiatric services, and public funding for mental health has increased.

The government now has a holistic approach in promoting mental health by way of a service delivery model covering prevention, early identification, timely intervention and treatment, and rehabilitation for those in need.

Following the international trend to focus more on community and ambulatory care in treating mental illness, the authority operates cluster-based psychiatric services in the city's 18 districts.

Besides 260,000 psychiatric outreach cases and 98,000 psychogeriatric outreach attendances in 2013-14, there were 17,000 patients with severe mental illness who in 2014-15 came under the authority's citywide case-management programme. The authority estimates that, among our 7.2 million population, there are one million to 1.7 million who have mental disorders; and within this group, 70,000 to 200,000 suffer from severe mental illness, which is no small number. The media regularly highlights stories of family tragedies involving the mentally ill. The public perception is that the mental health situation is worsening because of poor living and environmental conditions, the growing wealth gap and increasing social pressures.

The Hong Kong Civic Association urges the government to consider setting up a mental health commission. It could review the mental health situation of our young people, which has declined to a "distressing" level, according to a local specialist. There is a long-term need for such a commission to be involved in enlisting more grass-roots support to foster a caring and enlightened attitude towards mental health patients throughout the city.

This commission, supported by the government and with a broad-based community effort, could enhance the quality of life of our citizens.

Hilton Cheong-Leen, president; Frederick Lynn, chairman;
Professor George Woo, chairman, health-care committee,
Hong Kong Civic Association

成立專責委員會 檢討精神科服務

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過去五年，政府大力擴展精神健康服務，以應公眾所需，如早期偵測與治療、復康、社區支援，以及為有需要者提供長期治療與照顧等。

舉例說，2011 至 12 年度，醫院管理局便擴展跨專業團隊，為患了自閉症和過度活症的兒童提供早期識別、評估和治療服務。而在 2013-14 年度，超過 208,000 有精神問題的人接受了醫管局的精神科服務，精神健康的撥款亦有增加。

政府現時在促進精神健康上有一個全盤的方法，採用的模式涵蓋了為有需要人士提供預防、早期識別、及時介入和治療，以及復康服務。

醫管局亦順應國際治療精神病的趨勢，強調社區及非住院式照顧，在全港十八區提供以聯網為基礎的精神科服務。

除了 2013 至 14 年度的 260,000 宗精神科外展個案和 98,000 宗老年精神病家居照顧外，2014-15 年度有 17,000 位嚴重精神病患者被納入醫管局的社區個案管理計劃之內。醫管局估計，我們的 720 萬人口裡，有 100 至 170 萬人精神有問題，其中 7 萬至 20 萬人有嚴重精神病，這可不是小數目。傳媒亦經常報道牽涉精神病的家庭悲劇。公眾認為精神健康情況每下愈況的原因是生活環境惡化、貧富懸殊日趨嚴重，以及社會壓力愈來愈大。

香港公民協會籲請政府考慮成立一個精神健康委員會。這個委員會可以檢討本港年輕人的精神健康情況；據本地一位專家所言，我們的年輕人都感到精神困擾。長遠而言，委員會可以在基層做教育和推廣工作，培養社會大眾對精神病患者的關顧和開明的態度。

這個委員會在政府的支持和社人士共同努力之下，應該可以提升香港市民的生活質素。

香港公民協會會長張有興、主席林國華、醫療委員會主席胡志誠教授