



養和醫院

HONG KONG SANATORIUM & HOSPITAL

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Development Project of A Modern Hospital: Efforts in Vain

The Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital submitted the construction plans of its Central Block and Li Shu Fan Block to the Buildings Department in September 2007 and again in February this year.

Unfortunately, both submissions were rejected by the authorities. The second submission was turned down because the Town Planning Board has all of a sudden introduced a 12-storey height restriction on all developments in the Wong Nai Chung Zoning Plan in January 2008. This new policy is in total contradiction to the originally permitted building height in the Hospital land lease, which uses plot ratio in the calculation of building expansion, and has thus unfairly stifled the Hospital's development project.

The Hospital has embarked on a phased development programme since the early 80's. To date, two phases have been completed and Phase III is near to commissioning. We are now decanting the existing facilities and proceeding with two other very important phases, Phase IV & V, to redevelop our Central Block and the Li Shu Fan Block respectively. With the restriction, the current 8-storey building can only be extended to 12-storeys, which would fail to accommodate the Hospital's planned services and facilities.

The Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital was established in 1922 and has since developed from a nursing home to a renowned general hospital. With over 400 beds and 30 specialist medical departments/ centres, today the Hospital provides comprehensive and advanced medical services to some 30,000 inpatients and 3 to 4 times that number of outpatients annually. While the occupancy remains at 100% in the last few years, the demand for services continues to grow at an astounding average of over 10% every year. We are facing a situation whereby patients are often deprived of medical services even for medical emergencies. Currently, almost 14% of emergency cases are turned away due to the shortage of hospital beds. For non-emergency cases, patients are put on a waiting list for 7 to 10 days. Expectant mothers have to make bookings several months before confinement. We firmly believe the development programme is the only way to meet the ever-rising demand.

While the government is advocating healthcare reform and financing and planning to establish mandatory health insurance that necessitates the provision of more health facilities in the private sector, the height restriction imposed by the Town Planning Board seems to be heading in the opposite direction. It would no doubt be a shame if the Hospital is prevented from increasing beds and facilities to serve the community.

Creating a better environment for hospitals is a rising expectation of the community. To lower the incidence of cross-infection and medical incidents, more private rooms have to be built and the space between beds should be expanded. This can only be achieved through the upgrading of capacity.

We participated in an exchange programme with Korean medical professionals a year ago, during which they shared with us the views of their government. The Korean government recognises the importance of providing high quality schools and hospitals to attract foreign investors to invest in their country. On



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the other hand, Hong Kong has built a large number of new international schools in recent years, but there is no private hospital having been established in the last fourteen years.

Hong Kong no doubt needs more private hospitals with advanced facilities, first-class environment and high quality medical care. The Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital has received the prestigious Gold award in this year's Reader's Digest Asia Trusted Brands Survey in the category of hospitals in Hong Kong. It testifies to the trust and confidence of the community as recognition of our commitment and dedication. We believe this is our contribution to Hong Kong's reputation as Asia's World City.

In addition, the redevelopment project of our Hospital includes the design of a vehicular ingress and egress at Wong Nai Chung Road, thus providing a solution to the chronic traffic congestion at the Village Road junction, which will benefit the residents in Happy Valley.

The Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital Limited is owned by Li Shu Fan Medical Foundation Limited, which is a non-profit organization. Any excess of income over costs can only be used to support medical research, educational activities and the development and improvement of services. The Hospital dedicates itself in training medical professionals and recruits 120 to 140 nursing students every year to relieve the shortage of nurses in Hong Kong. Moreover, our Hospital provides clinical training to medical students and specialists in General Surgery of the University of Hong Kong. Specialty training is organised for doctors in Ophthalmology, Family Medicine and Orthopaedics. Medical services in Hong Kong will be significantly improved with the expansion of the Hospital.

We have produced a prudent and meticulous development plan for our Hospital. We have taken into consideration not only the enhancement of services but also to take advantage of our unique location in the urban district. The choice of redeveloping at the original site is to make the best use of scarce land resources. If our development plan is allowed to proceed, our community will be presented with the most efficient, modern and advanced medical care services in 6-8 years.

As a socially responsible organisation, the Hospital strongly calls on the members of the Town Planning Board to give priority to healthcare development and relax the height restriction. Without such exemption, the Hospital will have no choice but to apply to the government for the allocation of a new site to enable us to go ahead with our development project.

Dr. Kwong Kwok Hay
Deputy Medical Superintendent
Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital
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