兒童癌病基金
Children's Cancer Foundation

The Vision

A Children's Hospital for Hong Kong

A Children's Cancer Foundation Initiative

January 2007

It's Time!

In 1970, the late civic leader Wilfred S.B. Wong proposed to the Legislative Council that Hong Kong should establish a "Government Children's Hospital".

Listed among the benefits were the attraction for medical students to choose paediatrics; an enhanced learning environment; attracting overseas talent; and developing the specialised field of paediatric surgery.

Eight years later in 1978, LegCo member Hilton Cheong-Leen called for the building of a modern paediatric hospital for 300-500 beds on Hong Kong Island. He noted that while the facilities at the time allowed for the teaching of diagnosis and treatment to the doctors of tomorrow, it was not possible "to show them the type of accommodation and environment which is now regarded as appropriate for sick children in the developed countries of the world".

Outlining the emotional, intellectual, physical and environmental needs of the sick child and his parents, and the requirement for paediatric units to be designed to address these issues, he continued "the medical arguments in support of the urgent need for better paediatric facilities in Hong Kong relate to the increasing complexity of modern diagnostic and therapeutic facilities".

Some of the key advantages of a dedicated children's hospital, Mr Cheong-Leen noted, include diagnostic departments specifically equipped for the micro-methods applicable to children, and that in such facilities the whole staff are totally committed to the problems of sick children.

Four years later it was the turn of LegCo member and paediatrician Dr Henrietta Ip. "Where else in the world would there be a city with so many children yet without a children's hospital?" Dr Ip asked the Legislative Council in her maiden speech in October 1982.

The following year Dr Ip told LegCo members that such a hospital would act as a centre of excellence in the quality of paediatric care for other establishments to follow suit. In a long list of benefits to patients, parents and the medical community, she noted that "Children will no longer experience admission to such a hospital as a fear, but as a reassurance that they will get better. Frightened novice parents will become confident when they realise that no matter day or night, no matter what is wrong with their children's health, they will have the children's hospital to turn to. With pooling of resources…there will be more efficient utilisation. It will pave the way for the improvement of service…unrestricted visiting hours, adolescent wards, extended clinic hours, paediatric nursing, intensive care units for children, day beds, paediatric clinics within a hospital using the same hospital records, the establishment of paediatric subspecialties within one hospital setting such that doctors go to the child and not the child to the doctor".

> ***"Where else in the world would there be a city with so many children yet without a children's hospital?"***

36 years later as we come to the close of 2006 and the Children's Cancer Foundation continues its efforts to realise these long-held dreams, the aspirations expressed by Mr Wong, Mr Cheong-Leen and Dr Ip still resonate clearly.

According to the government's 2006 Policy Agenda, it is now official policy to explore the establishment of multipartite tertiary and specialised medical centres with the participation of the public, private sectors and the universities. Such collaboration will facilitate cross-fertilization of expertise, raise professional standards, and provide valuable training opportunities for up and coming healthcare professionals in both the public and private sectors. Patient care would be enhanced and doctors and other healthcare professionals would enjoy new training opportunities and broaden their professional knowledge.

Do some of those words sound familiar? If so, it's because they were first said by visionaries ahead of their time.

Who knows? Dreams can still come true, even 36 years later. ■

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A Teaching Hospital delivering the highest levels of Paediatric care

The Vision talks with **Professor Lau Yu Lung**

Hong Kong is an international city with a population of seven million people. Overseas research suggests that there is a need for one children's hospital per 3-4 million population. Professor Lau Yu-lung, a renowned paediatrician specializing in immunological and infectious diseases and the Chair Professor and Head of & Adolescent Medicine at the University of Hong Kong, suggested that the two paediatric departments of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Prince of Wales Hospital) and the University of Hong Kong (Queen Mary Hospital) can become the centres of two clusters organizing and providing a comprehensive paediatric service network with other service providers for the whole of Hong Kong.

Professor Lau emphasized that research and teaching are the key elements that ensure the local paediatric service is of an international standard; therefore the children's hospital should be a teaching hospital with both medical and research students. The children's hospital should not be just a pure servicing unit.

"Let's look at the children's hospital in Singapore as an example. The hospital has been established for many years, yet because it is not a formal teaching hospital with research, its development is lagging behind what it should have achieved if it had been part of the teaching and research complex of the National University of Singapore," said Professor Lau.

According to Professor Lau, although the standards of medical services in Hong Kong are, in general, at an international level, there is still room for improvement. One of the ways is to centralize some of the paediatric services which are of inadequate volume due to fragmentation. The proposed children's hospital should be located next to or very close to a university teaching hospital and research centre. For example, Queen Mary Hospital is the teaching hospital for the University of Hong Kong, and the Faculty of Medicine Building at Sassoon Road is equipped with world-class medical hardware for research and teaching. This location will help the children's hospital to provide an advanced level of service.

Professor Lau pointed out some barriers that we are facing. "Firstly, the way that paediatric service is currently organized is too fragmented. Secondly, how can we build up trust to move from the present situation to a better organized and rational service with two major clusters?" He believes that the two children's blocks can be built next to the two teaching hospitals, with each of them providing 200 to 300 beds for children. Under this arrangement, the existing strengths and culture can be consolidated, with advanced technology and centralized services, and the two universities contributing to teaching and research.

"Looking ahead 10 years from now, Hong Kong surely can have 2 children's hospitals, as in Shanghai, serving a projected population of about 8 million in 2016," he concluded. ■

PLAY! A key aspect of the healing process

The Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF) has been providing play service to young patients since 1993, and it was one of the first voluntary agencies to introduce playwork in its service programs. In order to provide professional play service, the Foundation has a staff of one clinical psychologist, three hospital play specialists, one hospital play coordinator and a team of over 30 voluntary playworkers who have received professional training. These playworkers visit the wards on a regular basis to conduct play sessions.

> ***"Play specialists use games, videos, books and even some hand-made toys to help patients … release stress brought on by the illness"***

The team is devoted to creating a cheerful and friendly atmosphere for the child and teenage patients. Play specialists use games, videos, books and even some hand-made toys to help patients to get used to their hospitalization, release stress brought on by the illness, and to express their feelings through play. The clinical psychologist also provides therapy to patients and their families who may have emotional problems.

Normalization is the basic concept of play service. For patients who need to stay in hospital for long-term rehabilitation and convalescence, the team organizes festive celebration parties and craftwork projects so that the children will not feel detached from normal life. This helps them to reintegrate into the community when they have recovered.

"A dedicated children's hospital will definitely ensure the provision of a better-developed play service," says Ada Yuen, Clinical Psychologist and Head of the CCF's Play Service team, which has created a series of educational publications and accumulated a wealth of skills over the years,

An appropriate hospital environment and the centralization of specialized services are the two major elements in a children's hospital. "It is very important for the play service to have an adequate play area and the children's hospital can definitely fulfill this need. The new hospital should have different playrooms dedicated to children in different age groups, so that the team can

centralize their resources in one building and provide the best service to the patients," Ms Yuen added.

Instead of focusing the play service to child patients with cancer, the team can also expand their service to different wards and even the ICU. "The role of play service can then be changed from passive to active where it is provided not only in hospital, but is also made available to follow-up cases where psychological assessment is needed after the patient is discharged," Ms Yuen concluded.

A children's hospital would have sufficient space, manpower, appropriate atmosphere and coordination to make all this possible. ■

Learning how it's done well ... in Toronto

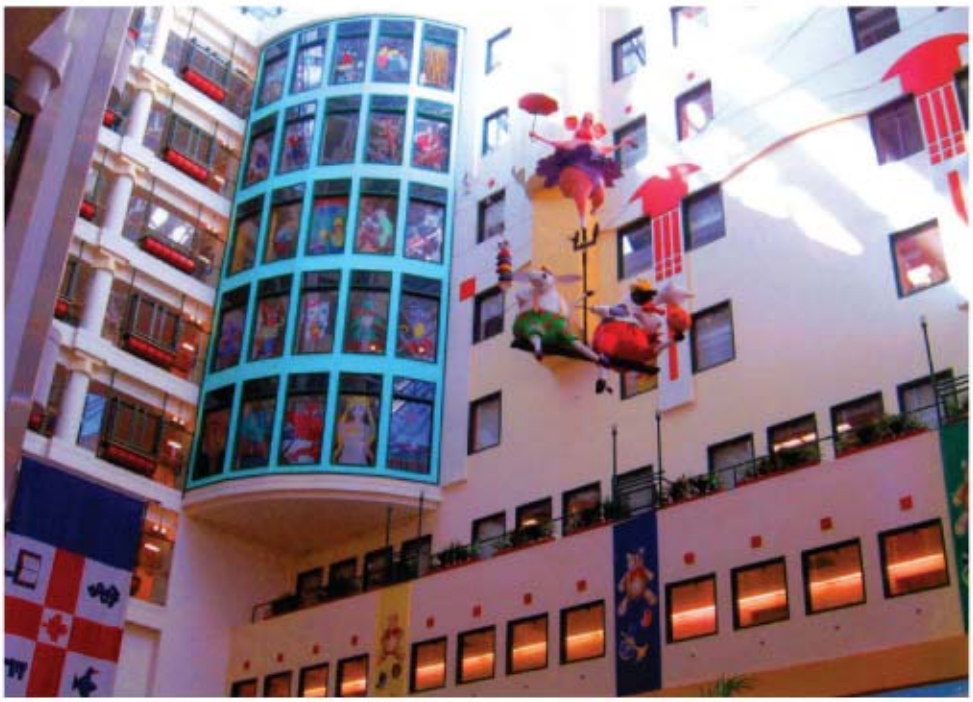
A couple of months ago Professor Thomas Wong, Dean of the Faculty of Health and Social Science at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, visited The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada. The children's hospital is a major tertiary hospital in the city with specialties that number almost the same as those in other general hospitals. He was very impressed by the design there, and felt that it should definitely be a model for Hong Kong's children's hospital project. The colourful pillars and escalators create a comfortable and relaxed environment for young patients and their families, and the children have no fear when entering the hospital.

"... it should definitely be a model for Hong Kong's children's hospital project..."

"Compared with the case in Canada, Hong Kong is facing a problem of resources decentralisation. It is very important for medical professionals to observe and learn from each other, carry out medical research, and to maintain an adequate database for clinical cases. The proposed children's hospital can provide a platform for professionals to centralise the resources and therefore reap greater improvements. Centralisation can also standardise the research methods to make research more convincing," said Professor Wong.

Almost every general hospital in Hong Kong has its own paediatric department, and yet the public do not know what a quality paediatric service is. The proposed children's hospital will raise public awareness towards paediatric services, and the expectation among the public will definitely promote an incentive of improvements to the profession.

Professor Wong stated that "another problem we are facing now is resources misallocation. The ageing population is an immense burden to medical services and although we need to pay attention to the ageing problem, the government should not overlook the source of the problem. Children are the most valuable resources of a society, and inadequate paediatric services will bring a snowball effect to medical expenses." For example, if the government cannot provide appropriate treatment for toddlers suffering genetic diseases and lifestyle diseases in childhood, it will become a huge burden when they grow up. "When children grow up healthy, they are much stronger mentally and physically, this is what we call healthy ageing," said Professor Wong. ■



Vision Facts

OVERCOMING ANXIETY

Surgery is frightening enough for an adult, so it's not hard to imagine the worries about pain, separation from parents, or the scary hospital fantasies children may entertain prior to an operation.

Surgical suites at modern children's hospitals are designed as safe and friendly environments for children. Many children's hospitals organize family tours of the suite, allowing children to see and touch medical equipment they may come in contact with, and they are encouraged to ask questions. Children also meet nurses and anesthesia staff as they journey through the preoperative area, operating, and recovery rooms. By talking, playing and exploring, children feel happier and more in control.

Nervous parents equal nervous children, and so these tours are a great time to let parents know the best ways to prepare their children for surgery.

The health of my son is my best gift

When Mrs. Ng was told that her son, Ka Fung, suffered from Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma six years ago when he was eight, she felt helpless and deeply grieved. She has not given up however, and has a strong resolve that with family support and her love, her son will recover.

In August 2002, Ka Fung started to suffer from dreadful stomachaches. He was suspected of having appendicitis and having gone to hospital for emergency treatment, subsequent tests showed that he in fact had Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Ka Fung spent more than half a year at Queen Mary Hospital where he underwent chemotherapy, which greatly diminished his appetite. Now, Ka Fung has recovered and is back to living a normal life. "This is the best gift to me," said Mrs. Ng.

"Now, Ka Fung has recovered and is back to living a normal life."

Looking back at the days when Ka Fung was under medication, Mrs. Ng recalled her terrible experiences. Mrs. Ng has two other children, a younger son and a little daughter. When Mrs. Ng stayed at the hospital to take care of Ka Fung, she almost had no time and literally no space to look after her little daughter whom she was bringing with her to the hospital. Mrs. Ng could only spend one to two hours everyday in the playroom helping her daughter do some homework. "I tried my best to give an equal share of love to my three kids, but I spent my days staying with Ka Fung, so only managed one hour with my daughter and therefore nearly no time for Ka Fung's younger brother. I feel so sorry and guilty."

When asked about her expectations of a children's hospital in Hong Kong, Mrs. Ng expressed that she hoped the new hospital could provide facilities for the siblings of the sick children whom the parents may need to bring along to the hospital while taking care of the sick children. Mrs. Ng also suggested that the children's hospital should put more emphasis on play service, as she believes this service helps children tremendously psychologically. "I could feel how happy Ka Fung was when he was with the play specialists, and I was happy too." ■

Vision Facts

DESIGNING A HEALING ENVIRONMENT

While there is no formula for designing a "healing environment" in children's hospitals, several factors are known to be effective in promoting wellness. These include:

***Opportunities for movement** – permitting children to freely locate spaces, assume different postures, create boundaries, reach new territories, and manifest power;*

***Comfort, security and stimulation** – creating variety and change in the child's sensory environment;*

***Control and identity** - allowing children some ownership of their environment by controlling visual, acoustic and lighting levels;*

***Access to the child's social support network** – providing comfortable accommodation for family members and caregivers; and,*

***Positive distractions** – incorporating elements that elicit uplifting emotions without stressing the child. The most successful distractions include music, art, laughter, natural scenes, and visits from pets and other non-threatening animals.*

What should a Children's Hospital for Hong Kong be called?

We invite you to send us your ideas on a suitable name for a children's hospital in Hong Kong.

Providing specialist care for infants, children and adolescents from birth to 19 years old, the proposed hospital could be named after a person, a place, or a fun idea. Children and parents want it to be a place of happiness and healing.

What do you think? Let us know your ideas, and we'll print some of the best in future editions of this newsletter and on our website - **www.hkchildren.org.**

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