

Chapter
6

Technology and Support



Direction

- 6.1 The delivery of a holistic approach to patient care should be underpinned by operational excellence and effective use of resources across the board. As the first step, we would focus on capitalising modern technology in the prevention and control of cancer and making best use of resources in supporting patients and carers in navigating their pathways.

Strategies

A. Investing in state-of-the-art technologies

- 6.2 Advances in pharmaceuticals and the medical field could save life and improve quality of life. There should be a balance in the consideration of timely introduction of new technology for cancer care and the careful scrutiny of the effectiveness when applied in the local context.
- 6.3 The Hospital Authority (“HA”) will optimise the use of the \$5 billion earmarked by the Government for the HA to upgrade and acquire medical equipment (including those for cancer treatment). The HA will consult its Coordinating Committees (“COCs”)/Central Committees (“CCs”) of different clinical areas to ensure that the allocation will strike a balance between replacing aged equipment and the adoption of state-of-the-art equipment. The Department of Health and the HA will regularly review and assess the need for up-to-date technology in complementing their services.
- 6.4 Health technology assessment, a multifaceted and systematic review of the application of a health technology including the safety, clinical efficacy and effectiveness, cost, cost-effectiveness, organisational implications, social consequences and legal and ethical considerations, will be conducted so as to ensure the appropriate use of technology (including through training) and the efficient allocation of resources. For example, modernisation and addition of linear accelerators, computed tomography scanners and magnetic resonance imaging scanners with more advanced functionalities can improve the diagnosis and treatment of cancer patients. Besides, the HA will plan for the

diffusion of advanced technology such as additional robotic surgery system to augment minimal invasive surgical services and Next Generation Sequencing technology to benefit cancer patients.

B. Developing an online resource hub to provide accurate and reliable health information related to carers

- 6.5 Coping with the diagnosis and treatment of cancer must be a stressful experience. With a view to alleviating some of the worries and anxieties, we intend to develop an online resource hub so that the public (particularly patients and carers) will be informed of what to do when one is diagnosed cancer, what resources materials are available, and what support groups can offer help, etc.

C. Pooling together community resources to maximise benefits to patients and carers

- 6.6 There are different community groups providing cancer-related services. We plan to create a “Cancer Network of Partners” – an engagement platform involving community partners to better coordinate all key resources available such that community efforts can be aligned, service gaps identified and service enhancements offered. Through better coordination, we envisage that we could meet more macro objectives and achieve economies of scale, avoid services duplications, and minimise mismatch in services provided and patients’ needs.
- 6.7 Promoting partnership with patients to provide patient-centred care is one of the key strategic directions of the HA. The HA established Patient Resources Centres (“PRCs”) in every cluster in supporting patients and their families/carers, including facilitating the networking between patient and patient groups for mutual support. PRCs including Cancer Patient Resource Centres (“CPRCs”) in the HA serve as hospital focal points in engaging the community

and liaising with patients and carers for enhancing support during the process of care according to service needs. As of December 2018, there are over 220 patient groups under HA's liaison network at the corporate or cluster/hospital levels, including more than 40 cancer-related patient groups.

- 6.8 CPRCs are established in six Clinical Oncology Centres and United Christian Hospital. The CPRCs provide free resources and services for cancer patients, including a cancer information library, professional counselling services, rehabilitation workshops, peer support activities, services which provide information and assistance to newly-diagnosed patients, as well as rehabilitation or palliative support for those who are going through other stages of the cancer journey. The service scope and effectiveness of the CPRCs will be reviewed and enhanced.
- 6.9 The HA has developed a Smart Patient Website to provide a one-stop electronic platform with information on disease management and community resources to support patients in self-management. It provides comprehensive disease information and practical tips on self-care for patients, including those with cancers. Local and overseas supporting organisations and other community resources are available on the website for strengthening information support to cancer patients.
- 6.10 With the establishment of an engagement platform with community partners, the service gap and role of different parties in the community will be better defined. As such, the utilisation of resources can be maximised without overlapping. With the provision of integrated information regarding cancer support services on the online resources hub, and community groups to take up a prominent role of delivering cancer services, cancer patients will have better knowledge of when and how to seek help and opt for suitable services.

Expected Outcome by 2025

6.11 We seek to achieve the following –

- (a) upgrade and acquire medical equipment of different clinical areas and introduce evidence-based advanced or new medical technology for different treatment modalities;
- (b) create a dedicated online resource hub to enhance health communications and to serve as a centralised directory to inform the public of cancer-related resources; and
- (c) set up a platform involving the civil society with a view to working towards optimal models in benefitting more cancer patients and carers.