



For immediate release
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Joint Statement from Hong Kong College of Emergency Medicine
and Hong Kong Society for Emergency Medicine and Surgery
on Enhancement of Accident & Emergency Department Services

Delivery of services in Accident and Emergency Departments (A&E Departments) plays a unique, crucial role in the healthcare system. The healthcare professionals in the A&E Departments work around the clock when faced with different medical emergencies. They strive to assess and treat severely ill or injured people within the golden hour, which is the main focus of their many years of specialist training in Emergency Medicine.

To ensure people with urgent needs can receive appropriate high priority care, A&E Departments of public hospitals have long implemented a patient triage system where patients are classified into five categories, namely Critical, Emergency, Urgent, Semi-urgent and Non-urgent based on their clinical conditions. Patients then receive treatment according to the urgency defined by their assigned triage category.

As for patients categorised as Semi-urgent and Non-urgent, whose conditions are generally relatively stable and not life-threatening, they may consider seeking consultations at General Out-Patient Clinics, private doctors' clinics or private hospitals. The goals of delivering effective quality healthcare services and saving the lives of patients in critical conditions could be achieved by optimising A&E resources.

Collaborative and multi-pronged approaches across different units are required to effectively tackle the challenges facing A&E Departments, ranging from increasing numbers of patients seeking consultations at A&E, the shortage of frontline healthcare workers, to the long waiting time of A&E services. The purpose is to enhance emergency medical services in a fair and equitable manner, with a good balance of different stakeholders' interests maintained for advancing sustainable healthcare. Suggestions include,

- To execute the Primary Healthcare Blueprint with the strengthened concept of “Family doctor for all” and to promote close collaboration between public and private health institutions thereby improving delivery of healthcare services
- To promote public awareness and better understanding of common health problems, in particular medical emergencies, to enable them to make informed decisions and have greater flexibility in choosing alternative non-urgent consultation arrangements subject to their conditions

The Hong Kong College of Emergency Medicine and the Hong Kong Society for Emergency Medicine and Surgery remain fully committed to the training of doctors in the specialty of Emergency Medicine through the provision and review of its internationally recognised training programme. They will continue to uphold excellence in the provision of healthcare service and professional competencies of Emergency Medicine specialists who can fully discharge their duties as guardians of lives at the frontline.

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