

Development of Long-term Care for Dependent Elderly People

The Second National Health Assembly;

Having considered the report on Development of Long-term Care for Dependent Elderly People;

Well aware that Thailand is becoming a truly ageing society, that a large number of elderly people have to face chronic illnesses, infirmities, or disabilities and become more dependent on others for help, and that health promotion and disease prevention measures for all people before they become old as well as for the elderly will ensure good health, reduce multiple infirmities and delay dependency

Concerned about the rapidly decreasing number of potential caregivers and ability of the family to take care of the elderly and *concerned* that the working population has to bear a heavier burden in caring and supporting the elderly, resulting in lower quality of life of both the elderly and working persons and that the elderly with infirmities or disabilities who are without caregivers or assistance from the community or who cannot get access to health service will become risk (vulnerable) groups, and that this is a matter of considerable concern;

Taking note that the central and local authorities including some communities have started to provide long-term care for the elderly in the family and community in such forms as volunteers or strong senior citizens visiting and helping the elderly in need, nurses from primary care units taking care of the elderly who cannot get up from their beds and that the attempts are still beset with such problems as inappropriate systems, lack of integration of social and health services, shortage of personnel, inadequate knowledge of the caregivers and lack of a clear support system;

Agreeing that there is an urgent need to put in place a long-term care, that dependent elderly people should be cared for at home or in the community by civil society with senior citizen groups as support, that as the local government organizations are close to the family and community and equipped with adequate administrative capability they should develop a care system for the elderly who could not help themselves at home, as well as providing budgetary support for their daily routine activities, procurement of rehabilitative equipment and traveling expenses, and that the local government organizations should improve the environment, housing and develop an inter-institutional linkage for the elderly who wish to seek a high level of care, and that the local government organizations should develop measures and standards for long-term care for the elderly in public and private institutions;

Hereby issues the following resolutions:

1. Approving the principle that **the State has the duty to promote health and provide care** for dependent elderly people and adopting the principle of long-term care for the elderly in Thailand, bearing in mind that such care is based on the family and community, that the care will be given in public and private institutions that closely cooperate and support each other in a unifying manner, and urging the government to set a long-term care policy for dependent elderly people as a national agenda

2. Requesting the local government organizations to:

2.1 Act as the host in coordinating with local organizations to set up a committee responsible for developing a long-term care for dependent elderly people, with representation from the elderly on the said committee and to specify a responsible party for the task, as well as including the matter in the development of local bylaws or annual local plans.

2.2 Develop an elderly database to cover all dependent categories.

2.3 Support costs and expenses for improving the living environment of the family that cares for the elderly.

2.4 Put in place centers to care for, shelter and rehabilitate the elderly as needed by the locality.

3. Urging the civil society sector, especially senior citizen groups and health assembly partners, to work with local government organizations to push forward local policies on long-term care for the elderly and incorporating the matter in the bylaws concerned, as well as inspecting, monitoring and assessing the work.

4. Requesting the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security to work with the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Labor, professional organizations and partner networks concerned to:

4.1 Consider increasing subsistence allowances for the dependent elderly as distinct from general allowances for the elderly.

4.2 Jointly develop the capabilities of local government organizations by providing various kinds of knowledge, including healthcare for the elderly, management, personnel development, and budgeting so that it is possible to provide long-term care for dependent elderly people in the family and community.

4.3 Consider having a separate agency to register long-term care establishments with the condition that those institutions for the elderly that need medical/nursing services shall register with the Medical Registration Division to ensure proper supervision and standards.

4.4 Support knowledge and skill trainings for relatives of the elderly and non-professional personnel such as volunteers and senior citizen groups to raise awareness about care for the elderly covering health, economic and social dimensions, while the paid caregivers should be further developed under professional supervision.

4.5 Provide personnel to act as care manager for long-term care.

4.6 Support primary care units in their work to take care of the health of the elderly and rehabilitate them at home, as well as providing necessary medical equipment support, including relocating the patients as need be.

4.7 Develop Social Welfare Development Centers for the Elderly to provide standard health and social services and to serve as demonstration centers for local government organizations to learn from and further extend the work.

4.8 Study impacts from policies or measures relating to dependent elderly people.

5. Requesting the Ministry of Education together with the Ministry of Public Health to produce and maintain professional personnel concerned, including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nurses in community medicine, nurses for the elderly, physicians specialized in the elderly, social workers, psychologists and paraprofessionals.

6. Requesting the Ministry of Public Health, Thailand Nursing Council, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and Ministry of Interior to jointly develop standards and mechanisms to care for dependent elderly people at the national level with participation from the community, locality and elderly, as well as ensuring such supervision to cover the public and private sectors.

7. Requesting the Secretary-General of the National Health Commission to report the progress to the Fifth National Health Assembly.