

Fairness in Access to Health Services by the Disabled

The Third National Health Assembly,

Having considered the report on Fairness in Access to Health Services by the Disabled¹,

Aware that lifestyle in the Thai social context has shifted toward modernity, causing illness patterns to change accordingly as reflected by the ongoing rise in statistics concerning accidents; cancer and other chronic illnesses that result in a significant burden of disease for the Thai people; including drug abuse, over-nutrition, lack of exercise, the approaching of the ageing society and injuries resulting from unrest situations in various areas; have all increased the possibility for Thai people to become disabled and dependent,

Aware that care for the disabled in the human rights context is a universally and nationally accepted concept; while Thai social attitudes regard disability as a burden, lacking the awareness that disabled persons have equal potential, rights and dignity,

Informed that the number of disabled persons in Thai society is on the rise and that most of them reside in provincial areas,

Concerned that the law regarding the human rights of disabled persons has not received advocacy for comprehensive and concrete practice,

Concerned that discrepancies in access to health services exist between people with different disabilities, between disabled persons living in city and rural areas, between disabled persons of different economic standings and between disabled persons entitled to different health insurance benefits,

Hereby issues the following resolutions:

1. The National Health Fiscal System Development Committee shall be aware of the discrepancies in disabled persons' benefits and health service fee payment

¹ Health Assembly 3/ main 3

mechanisms. These discrepancies relate to different health security systems and prevent disabled persons from accessing needed health services. The National Health Fiscal System Development Committee is requested to prepare a proposal for the Cabinet to task the National Health Security Office in conjunction with the Social Security Office, the Comptroller General's Department, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Interior (The Ubon Ratchatani Network), the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (The Udon Thani Network) to devise a fiscal system of equitable health care for the disabled with corresponding concepts and management practices. The initial proposal is:

- 1.1 Jointly develop services (The Chiang Mai Network) and a list for more modern and stronger (The Pichit Network) disability equipment, pharmaceutical supplies (The Nakhon Sri Thammarat Network) and non-pharmaceutical medical supplies. The benefit package (The Nakhon Sri Thammarat Network) is to be used as a standard which is reviewed and improved at least yearly so that it sufficiently and comprehensively (The Nakhon Sri Thammarat Network) covers each type of necessary and suitable health service (The Nakhon Sri Thammarat Network), and disability equipment for the disabled.
- 1.2 Issue or review existing laws (The Yala and Pattani Networks), rules and regulations to provide facilities of disabled persons (The Petchaboon Network) while taking into account other favorable policies (Chair) and to support public and private agencies, potential disability agencies and local administration organizations to participate in providing health services for the disabled.
- 1.3 Develop the establishment of (The Trang Network) local level funds for the disabled, i.e., provincial, district and sub-district funds, especially focusing on participation from sub-district health funds. Disabled persons shall be represented and participate in (The Network of Disabled Persons) fund management in a high quality manner (The Phuket Network). Efforts should also be taken to develop a fund to develop personnel to promote the health of disabled persons at the local level (The Samut Sakhon Network).

2. The National Committee for Empowerment of Persons with Disability shall task the Provincial Subcommittee for Empowerment of Persons with Disability and the Bangkok Subcommittee for Empowerment of Persons with Disability with:

2.1 Integrating the disabled persons health empowerment issue into the provincial plan for empowerment of persons with disability, focusing on efficient participatory processes from all sectors and comprising the following significant principles:

2.1.1 Emphasize equitable (the Nong Bua Lumpoo Network) access to health services for disabled persons; and addressing discrepancies existing between different disability types, areas of residence, economic status and health insurance benefits as well as

promoting disabled persons' benefits as accorded by law (The Songkla Network) with measures such as travel allowances or transportation services (the Songkla Network), improvements in buildings, physical environment and public facilities (The Udon Thani Network) to allow all disabled persons access to public facilities (The Nakhon Phanom Network) and to allow them to make use of these facilities, making available care services/assistants for disabled persons, volunteers to take them to health service facilities, sign language interpreters and access to health news, including providing fast lanes for disabled persons to receive services, and providing proactive local service teams (The Loei Network), etc.

2.1.2 Address the issues of specific health needs related to disability types in a high standard and comprehensive manner and increase access to quality services (The Songkla Network) by providing sufficient services and facilities (The Petchaboon Network) in health promotion, especially annual physical examinations, both in relation to the disability and for general health assessment, disease prevention, cure (The Songkla Network), treatment, rehabilitation; including necessary and suitable disability equipment as well as referral services for further treatment and rehabilitation as required on a case by case basis.

2.1.3 Link the disabled persons databases as well as various laws, notifications and regulations (The Chiang Mai Network) of main agencies with the Provincial Social Development and Human Security Office serving as focal point.

2.2 Allocate budget for systematic investment and implementation of health empowerment actions for disabled persons according to the provincial strategic plan and (The Lumpun Network) the provincial empowerment of persons with disability plan. The budgeting shall be harmonized with the National Life Quality Development for Disabled Persons Plan (The Lopburi Network) by i.e. providing opportunity for persons with certain disabilities to work in the civil service as appropriate (The Petchaboon Network).

2.3 Support academic mechanisms and disability organization networks at all levels, both at national, provincial, district and sub-district (The Nakhon Phanom Network) to conduct studies on disability causes and (The Rayong Network) to monitor local agencies' legal compliance and compliance with government policies regarding disabled persons' rights, especially in the provision of facilities and other necessary services and assistance (The Pattani Network) for the disabled.

3. The Institute of Health Promotion for People with Disability and the Health Systems Research Institute is requested to create more research potential to make available knowledge in developing the quality of life for disabled persons.

4. The Ministry of Public Health is requested to prepare a development plan for a disabled persons' medical rehabilitation system to empower service agencies in all sectors and accelerate the training of personnel as well as provide suitable distribution of manpower.

5. Relevant ministries: the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Transport (The Yasothon Network), the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, the Ministry of Tourism and Sports (The Pattani and Chiang Mai Networks) are requested to focus their efforts on providing education for disabled persons by (The Khon Kaen Network) setting ministry level indicators relating to the development of life quality for disabled persons and to continuously monitor and assess (The Chiang Mai Network) the situation of the quality of life for disabled persons for at least 5 years.

6. The National Health Commission is requested to appoint a committee on disabled persons' health to coordinate between agencies, partner organizations and networks in organizing health assemblies on issues specific to disabled persons' health; advocate for and systematically and continuously translate the resolutions from the National Health Assembly regarding disabled persons to practice by various agencies; as well as support the creation and management of relevant knowledge.

7. The Secretary-General of the National Health Commission is requested to present a progress report on this matter to the 5th, 7th and 9th National Health Assemblies.

8. Local Administration Organizations shall act as focal points for disabled persons integrative assistance, providing comprehensive services in physical, psychological, social and intellectual care. Educational opportunities should be provided for all disabled persons (The Chaiyapoom Network).

9. Prevention of disabilities from birth should be promoted by providing counseling services for married couples and providing advice on sufficient nutrition 6 weeks prior to pregnancy (The Trat Network).

10. The National Health Assembly Committee shall organize a national assembly for disabled persons and there should also be monitoring of policies relating to disabled persons (The Ubon Ratchatani Network). A law should be drafted to pursue this matter (Chair).

11. An Assembly for Disabled Persons shall be organized at least yearly to allow for exchange of views regarding health and vocation (the Yasothon Network).
