

## Alarm on nursing shortage

BY JOE WU

**A** legislator says plans for new services at Tuen Mun Hospital will aggravate a long-standing manpower shortage in existing services and endanger patients' lives.

Michael Ho, representing the nursing constituency, said the maternity and infant intensive care units would be affected.

He said six critically ill infants now shared two beds.

"When I visited the hospital yesterday (Saturday), eight infants were waiting for the two beds," he said.

The hospital was short of about 600 nurses, making up part of a territory-wide shortage of 4,000.

The hospital was preparing to increase the number of ordinary wards because of surging demand in the New Territories West.

"By increasing the ordinary wards, the manpower will become more strained and the patients will be further neglected," he said.

A Hospital Authority spokesman said last night that more staff would be sent to Tuen Mun, including its intensive care unit.

The opening of new wards was not an expansion but a shift of "existing services".