

Ambitious medical plan for the decade

5 more hospitals, 20 more clinics

AS PART of an aggressive development programme, the Medical and Health Department intends to build five more hospitals and 20 additional clinics and polyclinics before the end of this decade.

In a release yesterday, the department reviewed its projects last year and revealed future plans.

Increased demand for public health and medical services last year placed a strain on facilities in spite of continued extensions and expansion of services.

A spokesman for the Medical and Health Department said that to meet growing needs, a number of major projects in hospitals and clinics were completed in 1983.

For the first nine months of last year, more than 309,400 in-patients were treated in government hospitals and another 170,000 in government-assisted institutions.

For the same period, general and specialist out-patient clinics saw 11.1 million cases.

Pressure was heaviest at the three regional hospitals — Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth and Princess Margaret.

Central Health Education department campaigns continued to play an important role in helping the public understand and prevent the spread of diseases.

Construction on the first phase of the Queen Mary Hospital extension project also started last year. This is the largest project undertaken by the department yet.

The second phase of the Namlong Hospital extension was completed, adding three storeys to the tower block and providing more laboratory facilities and additional doctors' quarters.

An accident and

emergency section was opened at the Chaiwan Health Centre to provide essential services in the eastern district. The Shaukiwan Hospital, which is expected to be in operation by 1990, will have a full accident and emergency department.

School dental care services, introduced in 1980, continued to provide regular examinations and simple treatment to primary school children. There are now two school dental clinics with six more planned. With these new facilities, the department aims to extend dental care to all primary students soon.

Sophisticated whole-body scanners were installed in all three regional hospitals last year and a fourth will be in operation in the new Prince of Wales Hospital in May.

The department's methadone programme for drug addicts also continued to expand. Last year, a new evening methadone detoxification clinic was opened in Ngau-taukok Jockey Club clinic, increasing existing clinics to 24.

As part of its development plan for the decade, the Medical and Health Department will build five more hospitals and aims to complete one every two years.

In addition to the Prince of Wales Hospital, a 1,600-bed hospital for Tuenmun will be constructed. Three others in East Kowloon, Chaiwan and Taipo will have 1,400 beds each.

The three existing regional hospitals will have extension blocks built.

Twenty general clinics and polyclinics are due for completion before the end of the decade.

Complementary projects involving subvented and private organisations are also in the pipeline.

These include proposed extensions to the Yan Chai and Pok Oi hospitals and the redevelopment of the Rut-tonjee Sanatorium into a

430-bed general hospital.

Three smaller private hospitals, with capacities ranging from 200 to 600 beds, are also being planned.

To support the ambitious development programme, additional facilities are being developed to train more doctors, nurses and para-medical staff.

Apart from the University of Hongkong which produces about 150 doctors a year, the medical school in the Chinese University of Hongkong started its first intake of 60 students in September 1981.

Opportunities are also available for doctors to sit for higher professional examinations in Hongkong by arrangement with various medical bodies in Britain and Australia.

An institute of medical and health care at the Hongkong Polytechnic provides training for para-medical staff including radiographers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and medical laboratory technicians.

Training for registered nurses is carried out in government, government-assisted and private hospitals.

In 1983, eight training schools started operation, with an average annual capacity of 1,235 trainees. Three more nurses training schools are being planned.