

\$57m for on-line hospital scheme

THE Finance Committee yesterday approved \$57 million for a pilot scheme of computerised medical information for hospitals.

Another \$5 million was given as the annual recurrent cost of the scheme which will bring about improvement in "patient care and resources allocation."

The scheme will be evaluated by the middle of 1990 and the Government will then decide whether to extend the system to all hospitals.

Councillors at the meeting asked the Government to pay special attention to the question of linking the computers used in the pilot scheme with large computer systems in the future.

At this stage the Government was not able to estimate the cost of implementing the full scheme but Chief Secretary, Mr David Ford, told the committee that

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL



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there would be a financial evaluation at the end of the pilot scheme.

The scheme will be introduced in Princess Margaret Hospital and the associated specialist clinic at the South Kwai Chung Polyclinic.

Tendering will be done in April next year.

The Government's decision to go ahead with the project was prompted by the rapid develop-

ment of medical and health services which has given rise to considerable problems in collecting and disseminating information on patient management, hospital administration, and the development of staff and material resources.

At present, all information is compiled manually and kept individually by the medical institutions concerned.

The system is expected to improve patient care by providing more effective and efficient information collection.

It will also allow nurses to spend more time on care of patients because their administrative workload will be reduced.

The scheme will enable improvements in communication between the laboratory and the wards thus reducing the turnaround time of test results.

The scheme may also bring about more comprehensive, reliable, accurate and timely management information.

The Government said there would be an estimated annual saving of \$398,700 resulting from the deletion of three Clerical Officer II and two Clerical Assistant posts in Princess Margaret Hospital after computerisation.

In addition, there will be a notional saving of \$1.5 million per annum arising from professional staff being relieved of some of their existing administrative duties.