

\$1.02b bill for takeover

By SHIRLEY YAM

THE Legislative Council's Finance Committee will be asked at its meeting on Friday to grant \$1.02 billion for the takeover of all government and subvented hospitals by the Hospital Authority on December 1.

More than half of the sum is needed to fund the transfer of staff in subvented hospitals to the authority.

Because 84 per cent of the 23,000 civil servants in public hospitals have refused to opt for the authority's terms, the Hospital Services Department will be revamped as a 82-staff per-

sonnel management body for them.

All posts at the department, which now oversees all public hospitals, will be abolished on December 1 and new posts will be created at the Hospital Authority to accommodate staff working on different service terms.

About \$2.6 billion will be diverted, after the takeover, from the department to the authority, which had earlier been allocated \$1.7 billion for start-up costs.

The Hospital Authority also needs \$32 million to expand the manpower and facilities of its headquarters to

prepare for the takeover.

Legislators will also be asked to grant \$191 million, in addition to the earlier \$673 million, to fund the remuneration package for subvented hospital staff.

With more than 85 per cent of these subvented staff opting for the authority terms, the initial sum needed was under-estimated.

A total of \$337 million is needed to compensate public and subvented staff who joined the Hospital Authority without taking the leave which they are entitled to.

The subvented hospitals will need \$4.6 million for the coming five months.