

\$900m injection for 2 hospitals

THE government will spend about \$900 million to expand its facilities at the two major hospitals here, owing to the growing demand for services.

The expansion, to cover two double-phase schemes, will provide 925 extra beds and upgrade facilities at the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth hospitals.

Assistant director of Medical and Health Services Dr Pang Kwok-hung told the Standard in an interview that the Queen Mary hospital project will cost about \$700 million while about

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\$187 million may be spent on the other hospital.

When the schemes are completed, Queen Mary hospital will have a total of 1,900 beds and Queen Elizabeth 2,163, compared with the present 1,200 and 1,938 beds respectively.

Dr Pang said that the planning work on the Queen Mary hospital project is in its final stage and construction work is likely to start in the second-half of this year.

He said that the price tag for expansion at the Queen Mary hospital would almost be the same as for building a medium-size hospital in another location. But he said that the former move will be worthwhile.

The advantages of expanding the established hospital "outweigh the disadvantages", such as the elimination of duplicating efforts in

maintaining support services.

He went on to say that "as a teaching hospital, all we will have to do now is to add some paediatric beds, paediatric surgical beds and psychiatric beds" to fulfil additional needs.

"It is more appropriate to provide additional facilities within the Queen Mary hospital compound than to build facilities on a separate site," he said.

According to the first phase of the planned expansion of the Queen Mary hospital, two new blocks will be built. A 29-storey "Block K" will be built on a six-storey podium which will house laboratories and car parks, and an 11-storey "Block-J" will be built to accommodate mainly psychiatric wards.

Fronting Pokfulam Road, Block K will be within walking distance of the casualty block and Block J will be built behind the casualty block. When completed, the expansion would mean an additional 76,000 square metres of floor space for the hospital.

Dr Pang is optimistic that the main phase of the expansion - Phase I - will be completed by 1985. Phase II, which will upgrade other facilities such as air-conditioning, is expected to be completed in 1988.

Dr Pang said a computerised axial tomography scanner is to be installed at Queen Mary next year. The system is one of the four scanners to be installed at major regional hospitals. The other three will be allotted to Prince of Wales, Queen Elizabeth and Princess Margaret hospitals.

The Queen Elizabeth hospital will have two new extensions - to the B block and the K block.

B-block will have another seven floors on top of the existing three - to house a mortuary, prosthetics, electrodiagnosis unit, cardiac care unit and intensive therapy unit. There will be 225 new beds.

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A separate building next to B block - to house the institute of clinical pathology, medical staff library, school of post-basic nursing - will be built.

Complete air-conditioning is also included in the first-phase works, expected to be completed by 1985.

K block will have also another seven floors to house the institute of radiology and oncology, a family clinic and medical and radiological records.

Dr Pang said another clinic is urgently needed, owing to the sharp increase in the number of visitors last year.

There were 31,304 visitors in 1971 and the numbers increased in subsequent years to more than 43,192 in 1979. As many as 70 per cent of patients are now being turned away because the clinic is fully booked, he said.

He said there will be 10 consultation rooms in the new block. The existing six rooms will be used for special consultation.

The higher K block will provide an extra floor space of 6,300 square metres. It is expected to be completed in 1987.