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## Chapter 4

# Optimising Our Demographic Structure And Attracting Talent

## Preamble

Hong Kong faces the challenge of an ageing population. The proportion of elderly people in Hong Kong will rise rapidly over the next two decades, and at a rate much faster than most other advanced economies. This will have a far-reaching impact on the economy, healthcare, welfare, retirement protection, education and public finance. We need to prepare for this challenge.

We need to continue enhancing the quality and competitiveness of our population in order to meet the challenges of a knowledge-based economy. To this end, we will continue to devote substantial resources to education and vigorously develop retraining services.

To meet rising public expectations on healthcare services, the Government is progressively increasing resources to enhance public healthcare services and implement service reforms to address the issues of a changing demographic structure, increasing healthcare needs and rising medical costs.

We will continue to take measures that further enhance the long-term sustainability of the healthcare system including its financing arrangements. Based on the views expressed in the first stage public consultation on healthcare reform conducted in 2008, the Government has devised proposals for the next step in healthcare reform to initiate the second stage public consultation.

We have just put forward proposals for a Health Protection Scheme, which provides the public with the choice of government-regulated voluntary private health insurance that offers better consumer protection and enables sustained access to private healthcare services. The Scheme aims to rationalise the market structure and resource allocation in the healthcare system.

## New Initiatives

*We will:*

- Increase publicly-funded first-year-first-degree places to 15,000 for each cohort and double progressively senior year intake places to 4,000 each year, from the 2012-13 academic year, using the shared funding model proposed for the new academic structure.
- Establish a \$2.5 billion endowment fund to provide scholarships and enhance quality of teaching and learning in support of the development of self-financing post-secondary sector.
- Launch a pilot exercise in some public sector schools to strengthen schools' internal administration management and further reduce teachers' administrative work.
- As part of the primary care development strategy, launch a two-year advocacy campaign starting end 2010 in partnership with healthcare professionals to raise public awareness of the importance of primary care in disease prevention and management, and encourage the public to adhere to the core values of good primary care, including adopting a proactive approach in improving health.
- Formulate suitable land disposal arrangement for the four sites reserved for private hospital development at Wong Chuk Hang, Tseung Kwan O, Tai Po and Lantau, and plan for disposal of the four sites by phases starting from end 2011 or early 2012.

- Further strengthen the community platform for the provision of mental health services. The Hospital Authority (HA) will enhance collaboration with the social welfare sector in providing intensive community support for persons with mental illness. To this end, we will –
  - (a) roll out the case management programme to more districts to provide intensive community support to persons with severe mental illness;
  - (b) roll out the integrated mental health programme to all HA clusters to provide assessment and treatment services for people with common mental disorders in primary care setting;
  - (c) expand the target clients of the “Early Assessment and Detection of Young Persons with Psychosis” programme to cover adults; and
  - (d) further enhance community psychiatric services and psychogeriatric outreach services.
- Set up dedicated teams comprising different healthcare professionals to enhance the medical services for autistic children and the support to their parents and carers.
- Support the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts to migrate to a four-year undergraduate structure from the 2012-13 school year, in line with the implementation of the new academic structure for senior secondary education and higher education academic system.

## On-going Initiatives

*We are:*

- Continuing to encourage and promote public policy research in higher education institutions as a means to improve our policy-making capabilities, in particular the quality of policy research.
- Continuing to devote substantial resources in education to enhance the quality of our young generation, promote social mobility, and meet the needs and challenges of a changing economy.
- Continuing to enhance the quality of pre-primary education by progressively increasing the level of direct fee subsidy for eligible parents and providing financial support for teachers' professional upgrading through the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS).
- Planning with four remaining primary schools to turn into whole-day schooling.
- Implementing the fine-tuning of medium of instruction for secondary schools in the 2010-11 school year, starting from Secondary 1.
- Continuing to provide a broad range of school-based professional support services for kindergartens, primary and secondary schools to help them take forward education reform initiatives.

- Continuing to implement the new academic structure (NAS) through professional capacity building and supporting secondary schools and tertiary institutions, and conduct evaluation studies on NAS to collect feedback from different stakeholders and inform future planning.
- Implementing the Qualifications Framework by phases through the formation of industry training advisory committees to develop competency-based qualifications for individual industries, and developing a quality assurance mechanism to underpin the Qualifications Framework.
- Continuing to implement measures to enhance the learning and teaching of English in primary schools including attracting talent to the teaching profession; enhancing the professionalism of serving teachers; and providing additional resources for primary schools to develop school-based enhancement measures and to enrich their English language environment in schools.
- Promoting overseas exchange programmes to nurture students' global perspective and encouraging their participation in international events and activities.
- Implementing small class teaching in public sector primary schools starting from Primary 1 since the 2009-10 school year.

- Continuing to implement measures to develop Hong Kong as a regional education hub to attract and retain non-local students. These include increasing the non-local student quota for publicly-funded programmes, awarding government scholarships to outstanding students from the \$1 billion HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund, and relaxing employment and immigration restrictions for non-local students, and stepping up promotion in the region.
- Continuing to organise Mainland curriculum related study trips and exchange programmes for teachers and students of both primary and secondary schools as well as to give support in the form of professional development programmes and provision of teaching resources to empower teachers to promote national education through the school curricula.
- Reviewing the Post-Secondary Colleges Ordinance (Cap. 320) to provide a legal framework to facilitate the development of self-financing post-secondary education institutions with potential and capabilities.
- Continuing to explore the possibility of allowing more Mainland students to study in Hong Kong.

- Continuing to take forward the recommendations made by the Working Group on Textbooks and E-learning Resources Development, including preparation for the implementation of debundling textbooks and teaching materials for pricing, launching of the pilot scheme on E-learning in schools, as well as the acceleration of the development of the online depository of curriculum-based learning and teaching resources, with a view to enhancing students' effectiveness in learning.
- Reviewing the implementation of PEVS for continuous improvement to the quality of pre-primary education.
- Putting forward proposals for gauging public views on how to improve the operation of the non-means-tested loan schemes for students pursuing post-secondary and continuing and professional education, during the second phase of the review.
- Participating in the work of the Standing Committee on Legal Education and Training to keep under review and make recommendations on the system and provision of legal education and training in Hong Kong, including the provision of vocational training of prospective legal practitioners.
- Continuing the promotion of various talent admission schemes and reviewing their application procedures from time to time with a view to streamlining the arrangements for the entry of talents and professionals.



- Conducting the second stage public consultation on healthcare reform on the proposals for a Health Protection Scheme. The Scheme aims to provide the public with the choice of government-regulated voluntary private health insurance that offers better consumer protection for those who choose to subscribe and enables them to have sustained access to private healthcare services. The Scheme also aims to ease the pressure on the public healthcare system, thereby enhancing public healthcare services and serving target population groups including the low-income families and under-privileged groups more effectively.
- In accordance with the direction of the healthcare reform, making use of the increased government funding for healthcare to strengthen existing healthcare services and implement various service reforms, including the following on-going initiatives –
  - (a) Continuing to refine our strategy for the long-term development of primary care in Hong Kong based on the recommendations of the Working Group on Primary Care, and co-ordinate, with the support of the Primary Care Office under the Department of Health, its implementation through engagement with the relevant professions and stakeholders, including the following initiatives –
    - (i) develop primary care conceptual models and reference frameworks for specific diseases and age/gender groups, promote their use among healthcare professionals, and raise public awareness of them;

- (ii) set up a Primary Care Directory to promote enhanced primary care through the family doctor concept, facilitate a multi-disciplinary approach in delivering primary care services, and encourage continuous training and education among primary care professionals;
  - (iii) devise feasible service models to deliver enhanced primary care services in the community through appropriate pilot projects, including setting up community health centres and networks to provide more comprehensive and co-ordinated primary care services through cross-sectoral collaboration, and implement pilot projects to enhance primary dental care and oral health promotion particularly for the elderly; and
  - (iv) implement a series of pilot projects to strengthen healthcare support for chronic diseases to facilitate early detection, prevention and treatment; to raise the awareness of chronic disease patients and their carers and enhance their disease management ability; to encourage need-based and risk-based proactive care for secondary prevention; and to facilitate early prevention and intervention of complications to reduce the need for hospitalisation.
- (b) Continuing the three-year pilot scheme launched in early 2009 to provide five health care vouchers per year of \$50 each to elderly aged 70 or above as partial subsidy for their use of private primary care services in their neighbourhood community, and conducting an interim review of the scheme;

- (c) Building a hospital in Tin Shui Wai to strengthen medical services in the district;
- (d) Preparing for the establishment of multi-partite medical centres of excellence in paediatrics and neuroscience to improve the quality of clinical services to patients suffering from complex and serious illnesses as well as to enhance the standards of research and training in the two respective medical disciplines. To contribute to the long-term development of paediatrics and neuroscience, the centres will bring together medical professionals in the public, private and academic sectors from both within and outside Hong Kong, and partner with major international medical centres in professional collaborations, research and training;
- (e) Enhancing public healthcare services through public-private partnership to increase service volume, reduce waiting time, offer additional choices for patients, and enhance cost-effectiveness. Continuing to plan and implement a series of pilot projects, including: subsidising specific groups of patients under the care of public general out-patient clinics to receive primary care services from the private sector in Tin Shui Wai; implementing Public-Private Chronic Disease Management Shared Care Programme; purchasing haemodialysis service from private centres for end stage renal disease patients currently under the care of public hospitals; and extending the Cataract Surgeries Programme, etc;

- (f) Continuing to explore other public-private partnership initiatives to facilitate integration of the public and private healthcare sectors, promote healthy competition in order to improve service quality and professional standards, and provide more choices for the public;
- (g) Under the Electronic Health Record Office, continuing to (i) develop a territory-wide patient-oriented electronic health record sharing system based on express and informed consent for sharing health records of patients among healthcare providers so as to provide a pivotal infrastructure for implementing healthcare reform, (ii) formulate a legal, privacy and security framework for the protection of personal data privacy and system security, and (iii) promote the partnership of public and private sectors;
- (h) Further expanding the HA's "Electronic Patient Record Sharing Pilot Project" to allow more private healthcare providers, including those participating in public-private partnership projects, to access their patients' records kept at HA and enter the patients' clinical information upon the patients' consent with a view to promoting sharing of patients' records;
- (i) Planning to conduct public consultation in 2011 on legal, privacy and security framework for protecting the privacy of personal data in electronic health records;
- (j) Enhancing professional training and facilitating professional development for medical and healthcare practitioners, and improving their working arrangements; and

- (k) Overseeing the implementation of the three-year interim funding arrangement for the HA pending the development of a sustainable long-term funding arrangement in the light of the outcome of public consultation on the healthcare reform.
- Strengthening the regulation of Chinese medicine with the full implementation of the registration of proprietary Chinese medicines.
  - Preparing for the establishment of four public Chinese Medicine clinics, thereby increasing the number of clinics from 14 to 18, so as to enhance Chinese medicine service in our public healthcare system.
  - Implementing the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance and continuing to improve our infectious disease surveillance, control and notification system.
  - Implementing a multi-pronged strategy to minimise the risk of avian influenza outbreaks.
  - Implementing the Strategic Framework for Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, which is a comprehensive strategy to co-ordinate multi-sectoral efforts in the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.
  - Enhancing cancer surveillance by improving case reporting.
  - Continuing our efforts in tobacco control through the multi-pronged approach of publicity, promotion, education, legislation, taxation and smoking cessation, and implementing the fixed penalty system to strengthen enforcement of the smoking ban.

- Promoting healthy eating habit in schools and food premises and creating an environment conducive to making healthy choices of food to protect the public from life-style diseases.
- Developing a statutory regulatory proposal on medical devices, taking into account the findings of the regulatory impact assessment and the views of the stakeholders.
- Through collaboration with relevant organisations, continuing to promote registration for organ donation on the Central Organ Donation Register among the public.
- Continuing the subsidy scheme for elderly aged 65 and above to receive seasonal influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations to enhance primary care and disease prevention.
- Implementing the recommendations of the Review Committee on the Regulation of Pharmaceutical Products in Hong Kong to strengthen the regulatory control on the supply of drugs and to raise the standard of the pharmaceutical sector with a view to ensuring patients' safety and safeguarding public health. Legislative amendments will be prepared.