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## Chapter 4

# Medical Services, Public Health and Elderly Care

## Preamble

Hong Kong has a quality healthcare system supported by a team of highly professional healthcare workers. Our public and private medical sectors provide a full range of diversified services, including a low-cost public healthcare “safety net” that ensures no one in Hong Kong is denied medical care due to a lack of means.

To ensure the sustainability of our healthcare system, we will continue to increase investment in public healthcare facilities and make improvements to them through redevelopment of existing hospitals and construction of new ones. We are also committed to implementing a series of reform measures, including the promotion of long-term development of primary care and Chinese medicine, taking forward by phases the recommendations of the Strategic Review on Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development, proposed introduction of the Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme, revamp of the regulatory regime for private healthcare facilities and implementation of electronic health record sharing.

In face of the challenges brought about by an ageing population and the changes in the prevalence of diseases, we will uphold our commitment to providing quality and affordable public healthcare services. We will increase the capacity of the healthcare system on the

one hand and enhance service quality on the other through service and infrastructure development.

The Government is committed to building and maintaining a healthy community. We spare no efforts in ensuring that the wide variety of food available for consumption is safe, and the public at large are free from threats of animal diseases. We also work relentlessly to provide a clean and hygienic environment, and remain vigilant in taking actions to prevent and control diseases.

Ageing population has brought about various challenges to our society, of which long-term planning and sustainable development of elderly care services is particularly important. Our objective is to enable our senior citizens to live in dignity and to provide the necessary support for them to promote their sense of belonging, security and worthiness. We will continue to implement a host of measures and initiatives to enhance elderly care on all fronts.

For the frail elderly, we strive to provide quality and cost-effective long-term care services based on the principle of “ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up”. To this end, we will continue to strengthen and expand community and home care services, as well as increase and enhance subsidised residential care services. We will also carry on with our efforts to provide support services for carers of the elderly.

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## New Initiatives

*We will:*

### **Enhancing Healthcare Services Provision**

- Enhance healthcare services for the elderly by setting up the 5th joint replacement centre in the territory, extending the coverage of visits by the Community Geriatric Assessment Teams to residential care homes for the elderly, and strengthening the support for terminally ill patients in residential care homes. (FHB)
- Implement the recommendations of the Steering Committee on Review of HA through measures like refining the cluster boundary, shortening waiting time and adopting a refined population-based resource allocation model, etc. to enable HA to better meet the challenges of an ageing population, increasing prevalence of chronic diseases and increasing healthcare cost due to advance in medical technology. (FHB)
- Strengthen the services for critical illness and chronic diseases through, for example, increasing the service capacity of echocardiogram for cardiac service, enhancing the service quota of haemodialysis for renal service, and extending the service hours of radiotherapy for cancer service. (FHB)

## **Chinese Medicine**

- Invite expressions of interest in the first quarter of 2016 from non-profit-making organisations which are interested in developing and operating a Chinese medicine hospital at the reserved site in Tseung Kwan O. (FHB)
- Launch a pilot study on the standard setting for Chinese medicines decoction pieces under the Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards Project. (FHB)

## **Healthcare Service Development and Infrastructure**

- Commence the development of the second stage of the electronic health record programme, which tentatively includes addition of other sharable data, sharing of radiological images, enhancement of patients' control/selection of data, development of a patient portal etc. (FHB)
- Formulate the hospital development plan for the coming 10 years with a view to addressing the long-term healthcare needs of the population. In addition to the on-going projects, the development plan includes the construction of a new acute general hospital in the Kai Tak Development Area, the expansion of Haven of Hope Hospital, North District Hospital and Lai King Building of Princess Margaret Hospital, the phase 2 redevelopment of Prince of Wales Hospital, the phase 1 redevelopment of the Grantham Hospital and the redevelopment of Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital. (FHB)

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## **Ensuring Long-term Sustainability of Healthcare System**

- Take steps to establish a new regulatory regime for private healthcare facilities through consultation with stakeholders on technical details and eventually the enactment of a new piece of legislation. (FHB)

## **Disease Prevention and Control**

- Set up a high-level steering committee chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health to tackle the threat of antimicrobial resistance to public health. With a concerted effort of its members which comprise representatives from the relevant government departments, public and private hospitals, healthcare facilities and relevant professional bodies, the committee will formulate strategies and action plans against antimicrobial resistance from various aspects. (FHB)
- Relieve the pressure of seasonal influenza and its complications on the public healthcare system through a pilot project to expand the scope of subsidised vaccination in 2015-16:
  - to expand the scope of the Government Vaccination Programme to provide free seasonal influenza vaccination for persons with intellectual disability and elders aged 65 or above; and
  - to expand the scope of the Vaccination Subsidy Schemes to cover persons with intellectual disability.

The above measures will be regularised starting from 2016-17. (FHB)

## **Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development**

- Take forward by phases the recommendations of the Strategic Review of Healthcare Manpower Planning and Professional Development, including first introducing a bill into the LegCo in the first quarter of 2016 to amend the Medical Registration Ordinance, with an aim to adding four lay members in the Medical Council of Hong Kong, improving its complaint handling and disciplinary inquiry mechanism, and increasing its flexibility for the admission of non-locally trained doctors to meet local demand. In addition, the Government will increase the publicly-funded degree places in medicine, dentistry and other health disciplines by 50, 20 and 68 respectively in the 2016/17-2018/19 funding cycle for universities, and establishing a voluntary accredited registers scheme for healthcare personnel who are currently not subject to statutory regulation. (FHB)

## **Mental Health Policy**

- Implement a three-year territory-wide public education and promotion campaign in the light of the recommendations of the Review Committee on Mental Health chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health to promote to the public the importance of mental health. (FHB)

## **Food Safety**

- Put forth specific legislative proposals in respect of the regulation of nutrition and health claims for formula products and prepackaged food for infants and young children under the age of 36 months. (FHB)

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- Redevelop the Food Safety Laboratory of the Government Laboratory to increase its testing capacity in preparation for the implementation of new legislation on food safety as well as enhancing its operational efficiency. (FHB)
  - Put forth legislative proposals in respect of the regulation of the safety and quality standards of edible fats and oils and recycling of waste cooking oils. (FHB/ENB)
  - Conduct public consultation on the regulation of the level of heavy metal in food. (FHB)

### **Tobacco Control**

- Strengthen the enforcement actions in statutory no-smoking areas by the Tobacco Control Office of the Department of Health (DH), including designation of new no-smoking areas at bus interchanges located at the tunnel portal areas. (FHB)
- Formulate legislative proposal in respect of the regulation of electronic cigarettes. (FHB)

### **Ageing in Place**

- Implement a pilot scheme under the Lotteries Fund to enhance the training for foreign domestic helpers in taking care of elderly persons. (LWB)
- Set up a dedicated team to provide assistance for participants of the Second Phase of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly. (LWB)

## **Long-term Care Services for the Elderly**

- Strengthen the inspection and monitoring of residential care homes for the elderly and those for persons with disabilities. (LWB)
- Convert existing EA2 places of the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme to EA1 places which are of a higher quality. (LWB)
- Increase the subvention for the Visiting Medical Practitioner Scheme to enhance the primary medical service for ageing service users at residential care homes. (LWB)



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## On-going Initiatives

*We are:*

### **Enhancing Healthcare Services Provision**

- Increasing the number of public hospital beds, the number of operating theatre sessions and the quota for endoscopy examination so as to enhance the service capacity for addressing the ever rising healthcare needs. (FHB)
- Increasing the quota for general out-patient consultation and providing additional quota for emergency medicine wards to improve the waiting time for out-patient and emergency services. (FHB)
- Planning and implementing initiatives to promote the development of primary care, formulating reference frameworks for specific population groups and chronic diseases, promoting the Primary Care Directory, and co-ordinating and planning the works projects for the establishment of community health centres in various districts. (FHB)
- Enhancing public healthcare services through public-private partnership to increase service volume, reduce waiting time, offer additional choices to patients and enhance cost-effectiveness. We are implementing the following projects:
  - procuring additional places for haemodialysis services from the private sector to provide treatment for eligible patients with end-stage renal disease;

- providing outsourced radiological investigation services for selected groups of cancer patients; and
- subsidising patients to receive cataract operation in the private sector. (FHB)
- Widening the scope of the HA Drug Formulary to enhance the efficacy of treating various diseases. (FHB)
- Strengthening the manpower of the psychiatric healthcare team and introducing a peer support element to the Case Management Programme for patients with severe mental illness based on the recommendations of the Review Committee on Mental Health. (FHB)
- Increasing the number of psychiatric beds in Siu Lam Hospital based on the recommendations of the Review Committee on Mental Health, with a view to clearing up cases of severe intellectual disabilities on the waiting list in phases in the coming three years. (FHB)
- Planning for the launch of the Colorectal Cancer Screening Pilot Programme in mid-2016 to provide subsidised colorectal cancer screening in phases for eligible Hong Kong residents aged 61 to 70 within three years. (FHB)

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- Implementing an 18-month Pilot Study on Newborn Screening for Inborn Errors of Metabolism (IEM) in two public hospitals by the DH and the HA starting from October 2015. The first phase of the pilot study (from 1 October 2015 to 31 March 2016) covers 21 IEM. In the second phase (from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017), the pilot study will be extended to cover 24 IEM in total. It is estimated that about 10 000 babies can be screened for IEM each year. (FHB)
  - Planning to expand the scope of the pilot General Out-patient Clinic Public-Private Partnership Programme in Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin and Tuen Mun districts to cover more chronic diseases and patients, in the light of the result of the interim review of the programme. We will extend the programme to all 18 districts of the territory in phases in the coming three years. (FHB)

## **Healthcare Service Development and Infrastructure**

- Constructing Tin Shui Wai Hospital and the Hong Kong Children's Hospital at Kai Tak, commencing the expansion works of United Christian Hospital and actively pursuing the redevelopment of Kwong Wah Hospital, Queen Mary Hospital and Kwai Chung Hospital and the extension of the Operating Theatre Block of Tuen Mun Hospital. (FHB)
- Continuing with the minor works projects to improve facilities in public hospitals and clinics by utilising the one-off grant of \$13 billion allocated to the HA in 2014. (FHB)
- Commissioning the first stage of the electronic health record sharing system which will facilitate the sharing of the electronic health records of voluntary participants between public and private healthcare providers. (FHB)

- Facilitating the further development of private hospitals with a view to ensuring the healthy development of a twin-track healthcare system in Hong Kong. (FHB)

## **Regulation of Medical Devices**

- Developing proposals for statutory regulation of medical devices, in the process of which a consultancy study on the regulatory framework will be conducted. We will take into account the findings of the study, other assessment results and views of stakeholders. (FHB)

## **Chinese Medicine**

- Continuing with the Integrated Chinese-Western Medicine Pilot Project launched in September 2014 in seven hospitals of the HA in order to gather experience in the operation of integrated Chinese-Western medicine and Chinese medicine in-patient services, which will serve as the basis for formulating the mode of operation of the Chinese medicine hospital. Implemented in two phases, the pilot project provides treatment with integrated Chinese-Western medicine for three disease areas, namely stroke treatment, low back pain care and palliative care for cancer. (FHB)

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- Conducting a review of the development of the Chinese medicine sector through the Chinese Medicine Development Committee established in February 2013 to formulate a strategy to raise the professional standard and status of Chinese medicine practitioners, support research and development of Chinese medicine, promote treatment with integrated Chinese-Western medicine, expand the role of Chinese medicine in the public healthcare system, and examine the feasible mode of operation of a Chinese medicine hospital. (FHB)
  - Continuing to subsidise and monitor the 18 public Chinese medicine clinics to enhance Chinese medicine service in our public healthcare system. (FHB)
  - Planning and developing a testing centre for Chinese medicines by the DH. The testing centre will be specialised in the testing of, and scientific research on, Chinese medicines, with a view to setting reference standards for the safety, quality and testing methods of Chinese medicines. Before the establishment of a permanent testing centre for Chinese medicines, we will set up a temporary testing centre for Chinese medicines which is expected to operate in phases from 2017. (FHB)
  - Continuing with the research work after completing the compilation of Hong Kong Chinese Materia Medica Standards for 236 Chinese materia medica commonly used in Hong Kong. Our target is to set reference standards for around 28 Chinese materia medica each year. (FHB)

## **Ensuring Long-term Sustainability of Healthcare System**

- Implementing the Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme to provide more choices and better protection for users of private healthcare services. (FHB)

## **Disease Prevention and Control**

- Implementing the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance and improving our infectious disease surveillance, control and notification system. (FHB)
- Implementing a multi-pronged strategy to minimise the risk of and enhance Hong Kong's preparedness for influenza pandemic. (FHB)
- Continuing to implement and improve the subsidy schemes for eligible children and elderly people to receive seasonal influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations to enhance primary care and disease prevention. (FHB)
- Adopting a comprehensive preventive and surveillance programme to reduce the risk of avian influenza outbreaks and human infections in Hong Kong. We will keep the situation under review and update the relevant policies in a timely manner. (FHB)
- Implementing control on the import of poultry eggs to minimise the risk of avian influenza and other food safety hazards. (FHB)
- Implementing the Strategic Framework for Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases to promote cross-sectoral co-operation in the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. (FHB)

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## Health Promotion

- Making progressive efforts in tobacco control through the multi-pronged approach of publicity, promotion, education, legislation, enforcement, taxation and smoking cessation service. (FHB)
- Promoting registration on the Central Organ Donation Register to the public through collaboration with relevant organisations. (FHB)

## Food Safety and Healthy Eating

- Commencing the preparatory work for the regulation of cooked meat, which includes studying the regulatory regime of other countries, with a view to conducting a public consultation exercise. (FHB)
- Devising and implementing a strategic plan for encouraging reduced intake of salt and sugar in food to promote a healthy diet. (FHB)

## Animal Welfare

- Pursuing actions to tighten up the regulation of pet trading through legislative amendments with a view to implementing a new regulatory framework for enhancing animal welfare. (FHB)
- Implementing the “Trap-Neuter-Release” trial programme for stray dogs and monitoring and assessing its effectiveness. (FHB)

## **Veterinary Service**

- Drawing up regulations on the election of members from the veterinary profession to the Veterinary Surgeons Board of Hong Kong in accordance with the new provisions of the Veterinary Surgeons Registration (Amendment) Ordinance 2015. We will also support the Board in making preparations for organising the election. (FHB)

## **Safe Use of Pesticides and Veterinary Drugs**

- Continuing our efforts to promote and ensure the safe and proper use of pesticides. (FHB)
- Refining the details of the proposed regulatory framework governing veterinary drug residues in food with reference to the requirements and implementation of the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation. (FHB)

## **Elderly Healthcare Services**

- Continuing to promote the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme, which subsidises elderly people aged 70 or above to use private primary care services, including Western and Chinese medicine, dental and other preventive care services. (FHB)
- Continuing to implement the Outreach Dental Care Programme for the Elderly to provide dental care and treatment for elderly people in residential care homes and similar facilities. (FHB)



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## Ageing in Place

- Implementing the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly to enable eligible elderly people to choose the services that suit their individual needs with the use of service vouchers. (LWB)
- Increasing the number of community care places for the elderly to support ageing in place. (LWB)
- Implementing the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of the Elderly Persons from Low Income Families through the CCF to enhance support for carers of elderly persons. (LWB)

## Long-term Care Services for the Elderly

- Continuing with the implementation of the Pilot Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong to provide elderly persons on the Central Waiting List for subsidised residential care places with an option to choose to live in the two elderly homes located in Shenzhen and Zhaoqing which are run by Hong Kong NGOs. (LWB)
- Continuing with the work of the Elderly Commission to study the feasibility of introducing vouchers for residential care service for the elderly. (LWB)
- Increasing the number of subsidised residential care places for the elderly through:
  - the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme;
  - better use of space in subvented homes;

- building of new contract homes; and
  - identification of sites for new homes. (LWB)
- Exploring the option of converting or redeveloping Wong Chuk Hang Hospital, which mainly provides extended care, into a care home for the elderly with more residential places. (LWB)
  - Implementing the Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services to encourage more young people to join the care service profession in the welfare sector. (LWB)

### **Planning and Integration of Elderly Services**

- Continuing to provide support for the Elderly Commission to formulate the Elderly Services Programme Plan. (LWB)
- Considering suitable sites and operating mode for setting up Integrated Elderly Services Centres on a pilot basis to provide one-stop, multi-disciplinary healthcare and social services for the elderly at community level. (FHB/LWB)

### **Municipal Services**

- Continuing to take forward the five-year assistance scheme launched in 2013 for improving the fire safety and design of hawker stalls in 43 fixed-pitch hawker areas. (FHB)
- Seeking support for public columbarium development on shortlisted sites across the territory whilst promoting green burials in parallel. (FHB)

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- Working with the LegCo for early enactment of the Private Columbaria Bill. (FHB)
  - Conducting a comprehensive review of the fee levels and charging policy for the municipal services and facilities managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. (FHB)
  - Keeping up our efforts to mobilise community support for fortifying the good habit of keeping Hong Kong clean, in collaboration with government bureaux, departments and the DCs. (FHB)
  - Amending the Chinese Permanent Cemeteries Ordinance and the Chinese Permanent Cemeteries Rules to relax the restrictions on the use of cemetery facilities and provide for improvements in the management and use of Chinese Permanent Cemeteries to better serve the community's prevailing needs. (HAB)
  - Consulting stakeholders on concrete improvement proposals for a number of public markets after considering the consultant's recommendations, and actively following up the works. The proposals pursued will provide reference for future improvement to other public markets. (FHB)

## **Live Poultry**

- Drawing reference from the consultant's recommendations, including how best to cope with the ever present threats posed by avian influenza, with a view to consulting the public on matters surrounding the future of the live poultry trade in Hong Kong and whether the sale of live poultry remains appropriate in present-day circumstances. (FHB)