

## High-level Steering Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance holds fourth meeting (with photo)

The Food and Health Bureau today (May 28) convened the fourth meeting of the High-level Steering Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) (Steering Committee) to discuss the latest AMR situation and progress on relevant prevention and control measures in Hong Kong.

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, said, "The Government launched the Hong Kong Strategy and Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (2017-2022) (Action Plan) in July 2017, outlining the key areas and objectives to combat AMR. The Government departments and organisations concerned have initiated work to implement actions outlined in the Action Plan according to the timeframe laid down."

Since the launch of the Action Plan, a series of public education programmes and surveillance activities have been implemented, including issuing Guidance Notes on Antibiotic Use pinpointing seven different types of diseases formulated by the Advisory Group on Antibiotics Stewardship Programme in Primary Care to primary healthcare workers, organising publicity campaigns to raise public awareness of the threat of AMR, and enhancing regulatory actions against illegal sale of antibiotics. There was an increase of 16.7 per cent of the Seasonal Influenza Vaccination uptake rate in the Government's vaccination programmes in the 2017/18 season compared with the 2016/17 season, which helped reduce the incidence of infection. To strengthen the collaboration and partnership among different stakeholders, the Government held the Regional Symposium on AMR in November 2018, with over 300 delegates from the Mainland, Denmark, Japan, Korea, Macao, the United Kingdom, the United States and Hong Kong exchanging their expertise and experiences in the control of AMR.

"The first-ever territory-wide report on antibiotics supplied to various sectors based on the wholesale supply data between 2014 and 2016 compiled by the Government was published in April 2018. The second antibiotics supply surveillance report, to be released in June 2019, reveals that the overall supply of antibiotics in Hong Kong in 2017 has dropped by about 8.2 per cent when compared with 2016. Both the private doctors and community pharmacies were the main sectors contributing to the drop," Professor Chan said.

At today's meeting, the Steering Committee reviewed the progress of actions taken according to the Action Plan, and evaluated the local situation of AMR by analysing the surveillance results. Members also discussed the framework of the mid-term review on the Action Plan. The relevant Government departments and organisations will actively follow up the Steering Committee's request to press forward with the implementation of the work

under the Action Plan and report its progress to the Steering Committee regularly.

"I appeal for concerted efforts of all sectors of the community in controlling AMR in Hong Kong. Different sectors, including human and veterinary medicine, agriculture, food, environment and pharmaceutical industry as well as consumers should take effective measures to combat the threat of AMR," added Professor Chan.

Chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health, the Steering Committee was set up in May 2016 to call for collaboration, synergy and cross-fertilisation of all professional sectors under a "One Health" framework in response to AMR. It comprises representatives from relevant government departments, public and private hospitals, healthcare organisations, academia and relevant professional bodies.

To combat AMR, members of the public should:

- (1) Practise frequent hand hygiene, especially before eating and taking medicine, and after going to the toilet;
- (2) Do not demand antibiotics from your doctor;
- (3) Follow your doctor's advice when taking antibiotics;
- (4) Do not stop taking antibiotics by yourselves even if you are feeling better;
- (5) Ensure that vaccinations of you and your family members are up-to-date; and
- (6) Maintain cough etiquette, wear a mask if you have respiratory symptoms.

