

Hong Kong joins global Partnership for Healthy Cities

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region (HKSAR) today (December 13) announced that Hong Kong has joined the Partnership for Healthy Cities, a global network of 70 cities committed to saving lives by preventing non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as cancer or diabetes, and injuries.

"We are fully committed to building a healthy society and are proud to join this prominent group of cities working to ensure longer, fuller lives for the residents," said a spokesperson for the Food and Health Bureau.

Through this Partnership, cities commit to one of 14 interventions which include, among others, strengthening of public health data. "As part of the Government's commitment to the Partnership for Healthy Cities, the Department of Health will conduct a territory-wide population-based health survey next year. The survey will strengthen our information base to assess the latest health status of the population and to support evidence-based decision making in health policy, resource allocation, and provision of preventive health services and programmes," the spokesman said.

Hong Kong's health indices rank among the best in the world but like many parts of the developed world, it is facing an increasing threat of NCDs which will give rise to increasing mortality, morbidity and disability if not addressed. The four major NCDs, namely cancer, cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes mellitus, accounted for 56.6 per cent of all registered deaths in 2018 in Hong Kong.

In 2018, the Government issued "Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong", which has proposed a list of actions that Hong Kong would pursue to achieve the committed NCD targets moving towards 2025. The 2020 health survey – Hong Kong's pledged intervention for the Partnership for Healthy Cities and also part of the city's ongoing NCD surveillance – will help monitor the progress of Hong Kong's NCD prevention and control actions.

The Partnership for Healthy Cities is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies, in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) and Vital Strategies. It supports the critical role cities play in effectively implementing evidence-based interventions to prevent NCDs and injuries.

"The road to a healthier world runs through cities. Most of the world now lives in urban areas, and cities can rapidly implement meaningful policies," said Dr Kelly Henning, who leads the public health program at Bloomberg Philanthropies. "The Partnership for Healthy Cities unites mayors who are committed to action. With the Partnership's expansion to 70 cities, collectively we are preventing millions of needless deaths from NCDs and

injuries and protecting the health of generations to come," said Dr Henning.

"Around the world, cities are growing rapidly, and this presents significant new opportunities for action," said Dr Naoko Yamamoto, Assistant Director-General of Universal Health Coverage/Healthier Populations at the WHO. "The Partnership for Healthy Cities is showing how cities can play a key role in championing ways to tackle NCDs and injuries."

Mr José Luis Castro, President and CEO of Vital Strategies, said, "We are honored to implement this flagship urban public health initiative alongside Bloomberg Philanthropies and the WHO. Our team is actively collaborating with the Partnership cities and providing the necessary assistance to support progress in policies to combat NCDs and injuries. We view this work as core to our vision of strengthening health systems around the globe."

For more information on the Partnership for Healthy Cities, please visit partnershipforhealthycities.bloomberg.org.