

Hospital Authority welcomes 2024-25 Budget

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) Chairman, Mr Henry Fan, welcomed the 2024-25 Budget announced by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the Legislative Council today (February 28). The 2024-25 annual subvention for the HA will be \$95.4 billion (including \$93.5 billion recurrent), having increased by 2 per cent compared to the 2023-24 revised provision.

Mr Fan was particularly grateful for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government's increased subvention to the HA to enhance public healthcare services despite facing pressure on public finances. "With the immense support from our country and the HKSAR Government, the HA continues to strengthen its services, and provides suitable treatment and care to patients. Last year, the HA has launched a number of new services and programmes. For example, the Ambulatory Diagnostic Radiology Service Pilot Programme and other healthcare services at the Central Government Aided Emergency Hospital, which shortened the waiting time of patients significantly. Also, the HA also rolled out the Greater Bay Area Healthcare Talents Visiting Programmes and the Global Healthcare Talent Scheme, which attracted healthcare talents to serve in Hong Kong. The HA will continue to provide healthcare services that suit citizens' convenience and needs."

The HA will step up its efforts in promoting the sustainable development of public healthcare, including introducing smart hospitals initiatives in different clusters, enhancing tele-health and drug delivery services in specialist out-patient clinics (SOPCs), and improving patients' experience and operational flow with advanced technology. At the same time, the HA will enhance SOPCs service, including nurse and pharmacist led clinic service, thereby providing more treatment choices to patients.

Mr Fan also thanked the Government for supporting the HA in coping with manpower attrition. The HA will continue to adopt multi-pronged measures to attract local healthcare talents and those from different places to join and serve in public hospitals. Besides, the HA will actively develop and retain talents through various measures. The HA had already established the HA Academy last year, in order to provide systematic training to its staff, striving to enhance multidisciplinary care, support the need of service expansion, and fostering staff's professional development.

The HA Chief Executive, Dr Tony Ko, also expressed his gratitude to the HKSAR Government for the support on service enhancement of public hospitals. "The HA will continue to actively press ahead with different hospital redevelopment and expansion projects, and various minor works projects in hospitals, so as to enhance the service capacity of public hospitals in tandem with the continuous growth in service demand for public healthcare

services."

"Besides, public hospitals will open around 150 additional hospital beds in the next financial year, provide additional operating theatre sessions, Computer Tomography Scans and endoscopy sessions, and increase general out-patient clinic attendances. The HA is also grateful that the Government promotes the development of Chinese Medicine (CM), including by increasing the quota of government-subsidised CM out-patient services and extending integrated Chinese-Western medicine services."

In life-threatening diseases management, the HA will continue to strengthen its support to cancer patients, including enhancing chemotherapy and radiation therapy services. Cardiovascular diseases and neuroscience services will be also strengthened in order to provide multidisciplinary professional support. Meanwhile, resources will be reserved for the development of robotic-arm assisted systems for joint replacement surgery and angiography. Also, support to psychiatric patients will be strengthened by reinforcing the psychiatric in-patients service and recruiting more case managers to take care of the patients in the community.

The HA will continue to develop personalised treatment service for patients in need, including the provision of faecal microbiota transplantation service for suitable patients with *Clostridium difficile* infection. The HA will also enhance the genetic services, and continue to support the establishment of the Uncommon Disorders Registry, in order to better support the concerned patients.

Mr Fan and Dr Ko once again thanked the HKSAR Government's support to public healthcare services. The HA will utilise the subvention appropriately and strive to implement relevant policies and measures for the benefit of patients.