

# Hospital Authority welcomes Policy Address

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Chairman of the Hospital Authority (HA), Professor John Leong, has welcomed the various healthcare initiatives in the "The Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address" delivered by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the Legislative Council today (October 10).

Professor Leong expressed gratitude to the Government for the commitment to enhance public healthcare services in various areas to address community needs. The triennium progressive funding arrangement introduced last year also allows the Authority to formulate proactive plans and sustained initiatives for the coming three years through medium-term strategies.

"To meet the challenges of the increasing demand and the ageing population, the HA needs to improve the infrastructure and facilities of public hospitals to augment our capacity. The redevelopment and expansion works of Kwai Chung Hospital, Prince of Wales Hospital and United Christian Hospital have commenced smoothly, while planning and preparation are under way for the expansion projects of North District Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital's Lai King Building," Professor Leong remarked.

"Hong Kong Children's Hospital, North Lantau Hospital and Tin Shui Wai Hospital will continue to expand their service capacity, and a total of around 500 hospital beds will be added in various public hospitals. At the same time, day hospital and ambulatory services will be enhanced."

To address community concerns towards the need to use ultra-expensive drugs by patients with uncommon disorders, Professor Leong said that a consultancy study is currently reviewing the means test systems of the Samaritan Fund and the Community Care Fund Medical Assistance Programme. He added that the HA will follow up on the recommendations of the Consultancy Report. "We look forward to using the Community Care Fund Medical Assistance Programme in supporting ultra-expensive drug treatments for spinal muscular atrophy patients before the end of this year. We will also strengthen multidisciplinary care for these patients," he said.

"To improve time-critical care and treatment for life-threatening diseases, the HA will improve the coverage of 24-hour intravenous stroke thrombolysis networking service for acute stroke patients to the remaining Kowloon Central and Kowloon West Clusters, 24-hour primary percutaneous coronary intervention services will also be extended to Hong Kong Island network and Kowloon East Cluster, and more haemodialysis places for renal patients will be added. We will also strengthen palliative care consultative services in three Clusters, apart from continuous support of terminally ill residents of elderly homes with Community Geriatric Assessment Team

services."

Professor Leong said he was delighted to learn that the Government will further develop Chinese medicine services to provide a more comprehensive range of healthcare services for Hong Kong. "To dovetail with the development, the HA will continue with the third phase of the pilot programme of Integrated Chinese-Western Medicine, and work together with the tripartite partners, i.e. the non-government organisations and the universities, in enhancing the Chinese medicine services for the 18 Chinese Medicine Centres for Training and Research," he said.

"The HA will also dovetail with the Government in promoting primary care by raising the General Outpatient Clinic quota by 99 000 in two years to alleviate pressure on Accident and Emergency services, and enhance the collaboration of Family Medicine with Surgery and Orthopaedics & Traumatology to better manage the waiting time of these Specialist Outpatient Clinics," Professor Leong said.

"The HA earlier restored the annual salary increment mechanism to all affected staff to boost morale, and the HA will continue to provide more Associate Consultant promotion posts for Residents, create additional posts of nurse consultants and Advanced Practice Nurses, and strengthen clerical support to assist nurses to focus more on nursing care. To allay manpower shortage, the Special Retire and Rehired Scheme and recruitment of non-local trained doctors will continue."

Professor Leong pointed out that the HA will align with the Government's strategy in the Smart City Blueprint for Hong Kong. "The HA will consolidate and enhance its data analytics systems to standardise data collection work. The HA Data Collaboration Lab will soon be set up to facilitate research projects in collaboration with external parties and contribute to research under the Big Data Analytics Platform," he said.

Professor Leong also welcomed the Government's tobacco control measure in proposing the legislative amendments to ban electronic cigarettes and other new smoking products. He said, "The HA has always supported the Government for more stringent controls on the sale of electronic cigarettes and other new smoking products to mitigate the associated health risks."

Currently, the HA is providing smoking cessation services in 69 Smoking Counselling and Cessation Centres for patients who intend to quit smoking with a full range of assessment, counselling and follow-up services. The Centres can provide services to 18 000 patients each year. The success rate has been over 50 per cent. The HA will continue to enhance smoking cessation services to safeguard the health of the people of Hong Kong.

"Once again, we are very thankful for the Government's strong commitment and resolve towards promoting healthcare for the community as demonstrated in the Policy Address. The Authority will diligently implement all the initiatives outlined in the Address," Professor Leong added.