

# Primary Healthcare Office established

The Food and Health Bureau (FHB) announced today (March 1) the establishment of the Primary Healthcare Office (PHO) to oversee and steer the development of primary healthcare services at the bureau level.

A spokesman for the FHB said, "It is high time for us to actively promote primary healthcare services to change the present treatment-oriented healthcare system. The PHO will focus on the development of District Health Centres (DHCs) as a new model to leverage on public-private partnership and medical-social collaboration in providing primary healthcare service, to cater for the needs and characteristics of the districts and enhance public awareness of healthy living, disease prevention and self-management of health."

The first DHC in Kwai Tsing is expected to start operation around the third quarter of this year. With the experience gained from the first DHC, the PHO will plan and set up DHCs in all 18 districts progressively.

"The PHO will be responsible for monitoring the performance of DHC operators and driving DHC service development based on evidence and data as well as developing standards. It is also tasked to review the role of different key service providers in primary healthcare and to enhance cross-sectoral and inter-organisational co-ordination, as well as to oversee development and promotion strategies on primary healthcare," he said.

While the PHO will spearhead the overall development of primary healthcare services, the Primary Care Office (PCO) in the Department of Health will continue to perform a complementary role to support the PHO on matters relating to the development and updating of the reference framework for primary care setting and maintenance, promoting the use of the Primary Care Directory, and promotion of the family doctor concept and/or family medicine practice. The PCO will also support the PHO in setting up the DHC system.