

Secretary for Health chairs 14th meeting of Steering Committee on Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (with photos)

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, chaired the 14th meeting of the Steering Committee on Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (Steering Committee) today (September 11) to review the implementation of "Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong" (SAP), and discussed the strategies and measures in tackling non-communicable diseases (NCDs) with representatives of the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the Education Bureau, the Department of Health (DH), the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Hospital Authority and relevant organisations.

Members are aware that like many other countries and regions, Hong Kong is facing an ageing population and an increasing threat of NCDs. In 2022, the major NCDs, namely cancers, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases, accounted for some 45 per cent (provisional figures) of all registered deaths in Hong Kong.

The Government attaches great importance to the prevention and control of NCDs. To ensure effective surveillance of NCDs in Hong Kong so as to support formulating public health policy, resource allocation and adjustment to public health services and public health programmes, the DH conducted the third city-wide population health survey (PHS) between 2020 to 2022 to collect information on health status, health-related behaviours and practices of the local population. The Committee noted that the two parts of the PHS Report were respectively released in December 2022 and April this year.

At the meeting, members also had discussion on the Primary Healthcare Blueprint (the Blueprint), the public consultation on tobacco control strategies and the implementation progress of the work of prevention and control of NCDs.

The Government has been strenuously taking forward the relevant work of the Blueprint since its publication in December last year in a bid to build a prevention-centred primary healthcare system. Among all, members supported the Government to launch the Chronic Disease Co-Care Pilot Scheme (CDCC Pilot Scheme) in the fourth quarter of this year. Targeted subsidies will be provided to Hong Kong citizens aged 45 or above and have no unknown medical history of hypertension or diabetes mellitus as an incentive for them to match with a family doctor of their own choice. Participating citizens can receive in the private healthcare sector screening services regarding to hypertension and diabetes mellitus through a co-payment model, followed by early diagnosis and health management in the long run.

Apart from serving as the first contact point for citizens' enrolment to the CDCC Pilot Scheme, the District Health Centres (DHC) and DHC Expresses across 18 districts in the city will also advocate the concept of "Family Doctor for All". They will connect and co-ordinate various healthcare professions and primary healthcare services in both public and private sectors at the district level, foster long-term doctor-patient relationships and assist citizens to draw up personalised health plans.

Smoking can induce the occurrence of many chronic diseases. Nearly 600 000 people in Hong Kong are existing daily smokers and the smoking hazards there incurred cannot be ignored. The Government launched the Vibrant, Healthy and Tobacco-free Hong Kong public consultation on tobacco control strategies this July, inviting members of the public to express their views on the tobacco control work for the next phase. The consultation period will last until September 30.

The DH has all along been promoting a healthy lifestyle as the primary strategy for preventing NCDs and set up a multi-disciplinary Task Group on Promotion of Physical Activities in 2021 to encourage citizens to incorporate walking into their daily lives. At the meeting, members also discussed ways to encourage students to work out more. In addition, the DH promotes healthy eating through a series of activities, whereas the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food promotes less-salt-and-sugar dietary culture at various levels. Regarding cancer prevention, the DH has been promoting a healthy lifestyle to prevent the occurrence of cancers, making every effort to step up education related to cancers and launching various cancer screening programmes.

The Government formulated in 2008 a strategic framework to prevent and control NCDs and set up the Steering Committee on Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases. The Steering Committee steer the direction of work on NCD prevention and control in accordance with the World Health Organization's "Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013-2020". With representatives from the Government, public and private sectors, academia, professional bodies, and industry representatives and other key partners, the Steering Committee also advise, oversee and monitor the implementation progress of the SAP.

