

## Secretary for Health chairs 15th meeting of Steering Committee on Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (with photos)

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, chaired the 15th meeting of the Steering Committee on Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases today (September 11) to review the implementation of various actions under "Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong" (SAP), and discussed the strategies and measures for tackling non-communicable diseases (NCDs) with representatives of the Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB), the Education Bureau (EDB), the Department of Health (DH), the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Hospital Authority and relevant organisations.

Professor Lo said, "Like many other regions and countries, Hong Kong is confronted with the threats arising from an ageing population and worsening NCDs. Major NCDs, namely cancers, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus (DM) and chronic respiratory diseases, accounted for around half (50.6 per cent) of all registered deaths in Hong Kong in 2023. We cannot turn a blind eye to such a burden brought about by NCDs on the city's healthcare system. In this connection, we must join hands with citizens and all sectors of society to prevent and control NCDs.

"The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government is committed to combating NCDs to safeguard the well-being of the public. The DH conducts territory-wide population health surveys on a regular basis to collect information on the health status and health-related behaviours of the local population so as to ensure effective surveillance of the latest situation of NCDs in Hong Kong for the formulation of public health policies, resource allocation as well as adjustments to public health services and programmes. Meanwhile, the fourth territory-wide population health survey in 2025 is in the pipeline to facilitate the review of the nine targets under the SAP and formulate the prevention and control strategies beyond 2025."

The HKSAR Government has been attaching great importance to the prevention and control of NCDs among children and adolescents. According to the DH's [Student Health Service Annual Health Report for 2022-23 school year](#), around 90 per cent of students reported in the Health Assessment Questionnaires an insufficient level of physical activity, i.e. not meeting the World Health Organization (WHO)'s recommendation of doing at least 60 minutes of daily moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity. Moreover, children generally do not consume enough fruits and vegetables. The DH recommends that children aged 6 to 11 should consume at least two servings of fruits and two servings of vegetables per day, whereas adolescents aged 12 to

17 should consume at least two servings of fruits and three servings of vegetables daily. However, according to the data collected by the Centre for Food Safety of the FEHD in the [Food Consumption Survey in the Younger Population 2021-2022](#), only around 50 per cent of the surveyed children aged 9 to 11 met the DH's recommendation in terms of their average vegetable consumption, while the average consumption of fruits and vegetables among children and adolescents aged 6 to 17 was lower than the recommended level.

The DH has been promoting a healthy lifestyle among children and adolescents through life-course interventions to prevent NCDs. Apart from launching the EatSmart@school.hk Campaign in collaboration with the EDB and other stakeholders since the 2006/07 school year, the DH also launched the Whole School Health Programme in the 2023/24 school year with reference to the Health Promoting School Framework promulgated by the WHO and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Under the Whole School Health Programme, participating schools are offered professional advice and comprehensive support for them to conduct a systematic review and formulation of health promotion measures covering physical activity, healthy eating, mental health and social well-being according to the schools' conditions and students' health needs, thereby turning the school campus into a healthy environment conducive to living, learning and working. In addition, the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food under the EEB promotes a less-salt-and-sugar dietary culture at various levels and encourages school children to develop healthy eating habits.

The Government has been pushing ahead with the work set out in the Primary Healthcare Blueprint since its release in December 2022 in a bid to build a prevention-centred primary healthcare system. Members expressed support for the Government's Chronic Disease Co-Care Pilot Scheme (CDCC Pilot Scheme) and agreed on the provision of targeted subsidies (including those for laboratory investigations and drugs) to Hong Kong citizens aged 45 or above and having no unknown medical history of hypertension (HT) or DM as an incentive for them to participate in the Scheme by matching with a family doctor. Under a co-payment model, participants can receive HT and DM screening in the private healthcare sector for early treatment and long-term health management.

District Health Centres (DHCs) and DHC Expresses across 18 districts in the city not only serve as the first contact point for citizens' enrolment in the CDCC Pilot Scheme, but also actively advocate the "Family Doctor for All" concept to foster long-term doctor-patient relationship while connecting and co-ordinating various healthcare professions and primary healthcare services in both public and private sectors at the community level. DHCs and DHC Expresses also assist citizens, with reference to their specific health needs at different stages of life, to formulate personalised Life Course Preventive Care Plan and develop a healthy lifestyle such as taking action to quit smoking, maintaining a balanced diet as well as engaging in regular and adequate physical activities, thus preventing NCDs.

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. Steering the work on NCD prevention and control, the Steering Committee advises, oversees and monitors the implementation progress of the SAP. Members of the Steering Committee include representatives of the Government, public and private sectors, academia, professional bodies, industry representatives and other key partners. The Government will continue to play a key leadership role by co-ordinating and promoting the work in local prevention and control of NCDs, and strengthening the implementation of cross-sector actions through concerted efforts with relevant stakeholders.

