

Speech by CS at Hospital Authority Convention 2024 (English only) (with photo/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at the Hospital Authority (HA) Convention 2024 today (May 16):

Vice-minister Cao Xuetao (Vice-minister of the National Health Commission), Henry (Chairman of the HA, Mr Henry Fan), Tony (Chief Executive of the HA, Dr Tony Ko), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to join you all today at the opening of this year's Hospital Authority Convention.

I have been told that the Convention has brought together some 7 000 healthcare professionals and stakeholders from Hong Kong, Mainland China, and around the world.

You will hear from over 160 expert speakers in a range of symposiums, plenaries, special sessions, masterclasses, and more.

Hong Kong is blessed with a life expectancy among the highest in the world. And our infant mortality rate is among the world's lowest.

Our remarkable standing in health, internationally, is only made possible by the support of our high-quality medical care services and effective healthcare system.

And, of course, like most economies, Hong Kong is faced with challenges too. Our population is ageing; we have a shortage of healthcare professionals; and chronic disease is increasing in our community.

That is why the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) continues to increase investment in Hong Kong's healthcare system, especially the public hospital system.

This fiscal year, our estimated recurrent subvention for the Hospital Authority is some HK\$95.4 billion. And that is on top of the commitments we have made regarding ongoing capital projects under the Hospital Development Plans and other healthcare infrastructure upgrades.

All along, the Hospital Authority plays a key role in delivering our healthcare policies, providing comprehensive, quality public healthcare services, together with a strong safety net for the people of Hong Kong.

Healthcare professionals and supporting personnel are at the core of quality healthcare services. This convention is a welcome opportunity for us all to express our appreciation and gratitude to all Hospital Authority staff, and the healthcare sector at large, for their commitment and

contributions to Hong Kong.

And their achievements are particularly noteworthy, given our public healthcare manpower shortage. And I am pleased to add that the Hospital Authority's wide-ranging efforts to recruit healthcare professionals are beginning to yield results.

The Hong Kong SAR Government will continue to strengthen healthcare manpower supply and training. We will continue to support the Hospital Authority's drive to recruit more locally and non-locally trained doctors. We are also increasing training places, and providing new pathways for the admission of qualified, non-locally trained dentists and nurses.

At the same time, we are pursuing healthcare talent training and exchanges with the Mainland. More than 100 healthcare professionals from Guangdong Province have begun their exchanges under the Greater Bay Area Healthcare Talents Exchange Programme. And I am glad that they are here today, alongside professionals from around the world, under our Global Healthcare Talent Scheme.

Exchange programmes with Mainland cities like Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen are also being organised. Under these programmes, Hospital Authority staff will have the opportunity to learn from their counterparts on the Mainland.

Hardware development is also important to our healthcare system. Alongside the Hospital Development Plans, where all hospital projects under the First Plan have begun, the Hospital Authority is developing Smart Hospital and Smart Care initiatives. These programmes will ensure that our infrastructure remains modern and efficient for sustainable healthcare services.

On the policy level, the Hong Kong SAR Government is committed to developing Hong Kong into a health and medical innovation hub.

To that end, we are enhancing our drug and medical-device regulatory regime. That includes supporting clinical trials. Our long-term objective is to develop an internationally recognised authority that registers medical products under the "primary evaluation" approach.

With our Government's support, the Hospital Authority has also rolled out measures to help researchers and healthcare professionals conduct more clinical research. It has recently established the Central Clinical Research and Innovation Office. And it is also providing clinical trial sites, as well as patient participation in public hospitals, to promote scientific research.

Ladies and gentlemen, you are here, today and tomorrow, to discuss the latest advances and promising prospects in healthcare. You are here, as well, to learn more about the remarkable transformations taking place in global healthcare.

Given technological progress and ground-breaking discoveries in medicine, it is vital that we embrace innovation and collaboration,

regionally and globally.

My thanks to the Hospital Authority for once again organising this annual gathering of medical professionals, scientists, academics, innovators, entrepreneurs, and institutions around the world.

This is, let me add, one of the anchor events at this year's International Healthcare Week. That inspiring series includes the con-current Asia Summit on Global Health, together with other high-profile events like the Hong Kong International Medical and Healthcare Fair, which opens today and continues through the weekend; and the first-edition FoodMed conference and exhibition, which runs from May 28 to 29.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a rewarding Convention this year. And for those who have travelled to Hong Kong, I encourage you to find time to explore our dynamic cosmopolitan city, where East meets West. Thank you very much.

