

Speech by FS at CU Medicine 40th Anniversary Faculty Gala Dinner (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at the CU Medicine 40th Anniversary Faculty Gala Dinner this evening (January 13):

John (Council Chairman of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), Professor John Chai), Rocky (Vice-Chancellor and President of the CUHK, Professor Rocky Tuan), Francis (Dean of Faculty of Medicine, the CUHK, Professor Francis Chan), Philip (Dean-designate of Faculty of Medicine, the CUHK, Professor Philip Chiu), Arthur (Former Dean of Faculty of Medicine, the CUHK, Professor Arthur Li), faculty members, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I am very pleased to join you all in celebrating the 40th Anniversary of CU Medicine.

Although the pandemic forced a long delay of this Gala Dinner, I am delighted to see so many of you tonight.

The wait is over, and your presence here is a sure sign that our friends in the medical profession have plenty of – dare I say – patience!

Tonight we are here to reflect on CU Medicine's journey, and to envision its future as we embrace your 40th anniversary theme – "Succession, Innovation, and Dedication."

Over the past four decades and with the vision and commitment of the Founding Dean, Professor Gerald Choa, not only has CU Medicine supported patients and the community, it has also nurtured many of our leading medical minds. From early humble days where medical students had to attend classes in makeshift containers, the school has now emerged as the world's top 40, and a hub for numerous ground-breaking studies that shifted the paradigm of clinical practice locally and around the world.

You are no doubt a key driving force that has contributed to Hong Kong's rise as a centre for medical excellence, nurturing generation after generation dedicated and compassionate healthcare professionals.

The inspiring spirit of CU Medicine

Beyond excellence in medical research, education and practice, I am most impressed by your proud and strong tradition, a tradition that emphasises compassion and empathy in caring for patients. This requires doctors and nurses to not only treat illnesses, but also take care of the emotional well-being of patients and their families – showing support and empathy for people

enduring difficult and vulnerable moments.

I am delighted that this tradition has permeated your work and practice, evident from the profound appreciation by patients, the favourable feedback of the community, as well as national and international recognition of the school.

Investing in our medical future

Ladies and gentlemen, the success of CU Medicine, and the medical excellence in Hong Kong, reflect all the worthiness of investing in medical education. Rest assured that we will continue to support our medical schools in their development, in attracting more top-tier researchers, and equipping students with the resources and skills to excel in their chosen fields.

Building on the great foundation of Hong Kong's medical excellence, this Government is determined to develop our city into a premier health and medical innovation hub.

A key pillar to this vision is to establish Hong Kong as an internationally-recognised drug and medical device regulatory authority. We have launched the new "1+" mechanism in drug approval, and been making progress in the establishment of the Hong Kong Centre for Medical Products Regulation.

This will complement the many other efforts that we are taking forward to create a booming life and health technology industry in Hong Kong. On this, I wish to highlight the progress of attracting strategic enterprises in this field to come and settle in Hong Kong, be they industry giants or niche companies with frontier technology.

Our vision is this: beyond the know-how, investments, talent and job opportunities that they will bring to Hong Kong, these enterprises will gather their upstream, midstream, and downstream partners and associates here, forming a vibrant industry cluster in the city.

You may have noted that AstraZeneca, as well as several other life and health tech enterprises, are among the first batch of some 30 such enterprises that will establish research and development centres or production facilities in the city. Obviously, Hong Kong has our unique advantages: not only do we have the expertise and talent, strong basic research capability, but also our seamless integration of finance and technology. We are Asia's venture capital centre and No. 2 private equity funds hub, just behind the Mainland, and our listing platform is top class. Adding to that is our unique status as a gateway to the Greater Bay Area, Mainland and Asian markets. All the more so, the institutional strengths under the "one country, two systems" principle that protect intellectual property rights; and, more recently, the access to both international and Mainland data.

Looking ahead, there is vast room for collaboration between such

enterprises and our medical schools in research, clinical trials and much more. For all these endeavours, we count on CU Medicine for your valuable contributions.

Concluding remarks

Ladies and gentlemen, there is much to be proud of, as we reflect on the many contributions and achievements of CU Medicine over the past 40+ years.

Allow me to take this chance to thank Francis for the invaluable contributions he has made as the Dean of the school for the past decade. I also wish his successor, Professor Philip Chiu, every success in leading the school to scale new heights.

With proud traditions, strong leadership and endless enthusiasm from its faculty members, students and alumni, I am sure that CU Medicine will continue to go from strength to strength as it enters a new era.

After all, a wise man by the name of Carl Jung once said, and I quote, "Life really does begin at 40 – up until then you are just doing research!"

Once again, may I congratulate and commend you on your many achievements and contributions so far, and wish you the best of education, research and clinical service in the future.

Thank you very much.

