

Symposium held to discuss role of family doctors in primary care in Hong Kong (with photos)

The Department of Health (DH) and the Hong Kong College of Family Physicians (the HKCFP) today (May 11) jointly held a symposium to celebrate World Family Doctor Day 2019 and to discuss the role of family doctors in providing lifelong care and primary care in Hong Kong.

World Family Doctor Day has been celebrated on May 19 every year since 2010 by the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) to give recognition to the role and contribution of family doctors in healthcare systems around the world. The theme this year is "Family doctors – caring for you for the whole of your life", highlighting the crucial role of family doctors in providing lifelong care to patients from cradle to grave.

In her opening remarks at the symposium, the Director of Health, Dr Constance Chan, said, "Family doctors are the key to well-delivered primary care, which is the foundation of a sustainable healthcare system. This is particularly true and important when our society is facing the challenges brought about by our ageing population and the increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)."

"One of the major initiatives in 'Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control NCDs in Hong Kong' published last year is strengthening the health system at all levels, in particular comprehensive primary care for prevention, early detection and management of NCDs based on the family doctor model. By building up the capacity of family doctors in Hong Kong, we are definitely taking the right steps towards achieving the 2025 targets," Dr Chan said.

The President of the HKCFP, Dr David Chao, also highlighted in his opening remarks that family doctors have a key role in the management and care of patients in various stages in life, as well as a central role in the delivery of personal, comprehensive and continuing healthcare.

The speakers at the symposium today shared their insights on various perspectives in the development of primary care in Hong Kong. In a keynote address, the President of WONCA, Dr Donald Li, made a statement regarding the role of family doctors. He said, "We can make, and it's our duty to make, a huge humanitarian contribution and difference to the local and global community, because we are uniquely at the frontline of continuous and lifelong patient-facing health services."

The Deputy Head of the Primary Healthcare Office under the Food and Health Bureau, Dr Wanmie Leung, spoke with participants on the latest progress in the setting up of district health centres, which aims to raise public awareness on personal health management, enhance disease prevention

and strengthen medical and rehabilitation services in the community through district-based medical-social collaboration and public-private partnership. The Convenor of the Advisory Group on Hong Kong Reference Framework for Care of Diabetes and Hypertension in Primary Care Settings, Professor Martin Wong, updated participants on the latest scientific evidence and best practices on hypertension in primary care settings.

To assist the public to search for primary care providers, the DH in 2011 set up the Primary Care Directory (www.pcdirectory.gov.hk) under which sub-directories of family doctors, dentists and Chinese medicine practitioners are currently available. For more information on the concept of family doctor and primary care, please visit the website of the Primary Care Office of the DH (www.pco.gov.hk).

