

Hong Kong Primary Care Conference 2018
“Family Physician – Nexus of the New Era of Primary Care”
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Plenary I
Partnership with Primary Care in
Action against Non-communicable Diseases

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Dr. Constance Chan is the Director of Health of Hong Kong. Dr. Chan joined the Government as a Medical and Health Officer in 1988 and was appointed as Director of the Department of Health in 2012. Before her current appointment, she served as Controller of the Centre for Food Safety of the Food & Environmental Hygiene Department between 2007 and mid-2012. Dr. Chan is a specialist in Public Health Medicine. She graduated from the medical school of the University of Hong Kong and obtained a Master of Medicine degree in Public Health from the National University of Singapore. She is a Fellow of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine (Community Medicine) and a Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom. She holds honorary appointment as Clinical Professor in the School of Public Health of the University of Hong Kong.

Non-communicable disease (NCD) is a leading health threat. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), NCDs are responsible for 56.4 million deaths or 70% of all deaths globally in 2015. Hong Kong is no exception. The latest Population Health Survey conducted by the Department of Health revealed that half (50.0%) of Hong Kong people aged 15 to 84 were overweight or obese, and major NCDs, such as hypertension (27.7%), diabetes mellitus (8.4%) and high blood cholesterol (49.5%) were prevalent among the population. It is noteworthy that for every person known to be suffering from any of the aforesaid conditions, at least one other person with the disease went undiagnosed and untreated.

In January 2018, the Steering Committee on Prevention and Control of NCDs chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health endorsed a new strategy and action plan (SAP) which has taken reference to the guidance laid down in the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013-2020. The SAP defines a set of 9 local targets to be achieved by 2025 covering reduction in major NCD risk factors such as unhealthy diet including high sodium intake, insufficient physical activity, alcohol and tobacco use, containing the prevalence of hypertension, obesity, diabetes and premature mortality from NCDs.

The SAP recognises the importance of effective partnerships with primary care professionals as one of the key strategic directions in combating NCDs. Being the nexus and life-long companion of their patients, family doctors are well positioned to communicate about behavioural risk factors and their associations with NCDs, motivate patients to adopt healthy lifestyles to mitigate health risks, conduct assessment on health risks and opportunistic screening for early detection of NCD, and optimize the management in primary care setting. Strengthening the prevention and management of NCDs requires enhancement of the primary care delivery system. The Government is reviewing the existing planning of primary healthcare services and has committed to set up district health centres to support family doctors to provide coordinated multidisciplinary care in the community.

The plenary presentation will discuss how the concerted effort of the public, primary care providers and the Government in fighting the NCD battle would bring better health to our population.