

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1388/17-18(05)

Ref : CB2/PL/HS

Panel on Health Services

**Information note prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 21 May 2018**

**Strategy and action plan to prevent and control
non-communicable diseases in Hong Kong**

Non-communicable diseases, also known as chronic diseases, are major causes of ill-health, disability and premature deaths. According to the World Health Organization ("WHO"), the main types of non-communicable diseases are cardiovascular diseases (like heart attacks and stroke), cancer, chronic respiratory diseases (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma) and diabetes. Globally, these four groups of diseases account for over 80% of all premature non-communicable diseases deaths. Locally, these four groups of diseases accounted for about 55% of the causes of registered deaths in 2016.

2. An important way to control non-communicable diseases is to focus on reducing the risk factors associated with these diseases. According to WHO, modifiable behaviours, such as tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet and the harmful use of alcohol, all increase the risk of non-communicable diseases. Metabolic risk factors contribute to four key metabolic changes (i.e. raised blood pressure, overweight or obesity, hyperglycemia and hyperlipidemia) that increase the risk of non-communicable diseases. High impact essential interventions can be delivered through a primary health care approach to strengthen early detection and timely management.

3. The Department of Health has developed a strategic framework on prevention and control of non-communicable diseases in Hong Kong since 2008. The framework document entitled "Promoting Health in Hong Kong: A Strategic Framework for Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases" provides an account of overarching principles for the prevention and

control of non-communicable diseases and sets out the vision¹, goal² and strategic directions³ to help shape an environment that is conducive to sustaining people's health and well-being.⁴ To take forward the strategic framework, the Government set up the Steering Committee on Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases ("Steering Committee") in 2008. Three working groups focusing on promotion of healthy diet and physical activity, reduction of alcohol-related harm, and prevention of unintentional injuries respectively have been set up under the Steering Committee. In 2016, the Steering Committee agreed to redefine its terms of reference to align with the "Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013-2020" endorsed by the World Health Assembly⁵ in 2013. A task force was set up under the Steering Committee in 2016 to propose a set of local non-communicable diseases targets and indicators.

4. Based on the recommendations of the task force, the Steering Committee formulated and endorsed the document "Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong" ("the Strategy and Action Plan") in 2018.⁶ The Strategy and Action Plan focuses on

¹ It is envisioned that Hong Kong will have: (a) a well-informed population that is able to take responsibility for their own health; (b) a caring community that integrates public and private sectors to ensure healthy choices for the public; (c) a competent healthcare profession that views health promotion and preventive medicine as priorities; and (d) a sustainable healthcare system that incorporates strong elements of health promotion, disease prevention and curative care for our people, thereby significantly reducing the toll of disease burden including disability and premature death related to non-communicable diseases.

² The goals of the strategic framework are to: (a) create an environment conducive to promoting health; (b) engage the population in promoting their own health as well as the health of their families and communities; (c) prevent and/or delay the onset of non-communicable diseases for individuals and population groups; (d) reduce the progression and complications of non-communicable diseases; (e) reduce avoidable hospital admissions and healthcare procedures; and (f) provide high quality care for non-communicable diseases in healthcare settings in order to maintain health and halt disease progression.

³ The strategic directions are: (a) supporting new and strengthening existing health promotion and non-communicable diseases prevention initiatives that are in line with the strategy; (b) generating an effective information base and system to guide actions across the diseases pathway; (c) strengthening partnership and fostering engagement of all relevant stakeholders; (d) building capacity and capability to combat non-communicable diseases; (e) ensuring a health sector that is responsive to the non-communicable diseases challenges and improve the system of care; and (f) strengthening and developing supportive health promoting legislation.

⁴ The framework document can be accessed at the website of DH (https://www.change4health.gov.hk/en/strategic_framework/structure/steering_committee/promoting_health/index.html).

⁵ World Health Assembly is the decision-making body of WHO.

⁶ The Strategy and Action Plan can be accessed at the website of DH (<https://www.change4health.gov.hk/en/saptowards2025/publications.html>).

four non-communicable diseases (namely cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes) and four shared behavioural risk factors (namely unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, tobacco use and harmful use of alcohol) that are potentially preventable or modifiable and have significant impact on population health. The Strategy and Action Plan sets out the following nine targets⁷ to be achieved by 2025:

- (a) a 25% relative reduction in risk of premature mortality from cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes, or chronic respiratory diseases;
- (b) at least 10% relative reduction in the prevalence of binge drinking and harmful use of alcohol (harmful drinking/alcohol dependence) among adults and in the prevalence of drinking among youth;
- (c) a 10% relative reduction in the prevalence of insufficient physical activity among adolescents and adults;
- (d) a 30% relative reduction in mean population intake of salt/sodium;
- (e) a 30% relative reduction in prevalence of current tobacco use in persons aged 15 years or above;
- (f) containing the prevalence of raised blood pressure;
- (g) halting the rise in diabetes and obesity;
- (h) preventing heart attacks and strokes through drug therapy and counselling; and
- (i) improving availability of affordable basic technologies and essential medicines to treat major non-communicable diseases.

5. The Financial Secretary announced in the 2018-2019 Budget Speech that a recurrent provision of \$50 million would be allocated for the implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan.

⁷ These nine local targets are adapted from the nine global voluntary targets and 25 indicators in the "Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013-2020".

6. The Administration will brief the Panel on Health Services on the Strategy and Action Plan at the meeting on 21 May 2018.

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15 May 2018