



Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy  
July 18, 2017

**Policy on Subsidizing Chronic Patients for Purchasing Expensive Drugs—Submission  
of Our Hong Kong Foundation**

Subcommittee Members,

Thank you for this opportunity to make a few remarks on behalf of Our Hong Kong Foundation (OHKF).

OHKF is delighted to be part of the Joint Subcommittee on Long-term Care Policy's discussion on "Policy on subsidizing chronic patients for purchasing expensive drugs." Last December, OHKF released a policy research report on aging entitled "An Investment for the Celebration of Aging" led by Prof. Eng-kiong Yeoh. The report includes OHKF's views and recommendations on the institutions and initiatives to invest in in order to improve medical, social and long-term care services and, consequently, enable healthy aging in Hong Kong.

One such recommendation which can be aptly applied for assisting chronic patients in purchasing expensive drugs is OHKF's proposed Chronic Disease Management Voucher Scheme (Scheme). The proposed Scheme is a needs-tested healthcare voucher for chronic disease prevention and management targeted at low-income individuals aged 45 and above. The Scheme subsidizes recipients to consult a private general practitioner in their neighborhoods to assess, screen for and manage their chronic diseases. The goal of the Scheme is to detect chronic disease and/or provide management services, first focusing on those with hypertension and diabetes, as these are the two most prevalent chronic diseases in Hong Kong. The Scheme, divided into two tiers, would provide a one-off voucher amount of HK\$1,000 to those aged 45 and above for screening of chronic disease. Those identified with the chronic disease(s) of hypertension and/or diabetes will then be provided with a consequential voucher. Based on a number of assumptions and scenarios, this second tier is estimated to be HK\$3,040 per year for hypertension and/or diabetes. Those chronic patients who fall into this tier, then, could also be eligible to use their



procured voucher payment for expensive drugs needed in order to manage their chronic illnesses.

Of course, this initial amount of HK\$3,040 is nowhere near covering the full exorbitant costs that many chronically ill patients are faced with; however, OHKF foresees that after the Scheme has been piloted, performance-evaluated and fully implemented, the Scheme could be expanded to be a means-and needs-tested program for those needy patients who require access to expensive drugs.

OHKF is optimistic that this Scheme can be a key player in improving the health and well-being of Hong Kong. What makes the Scheme unique relative to other health management programs is its coverage of not only chronic disease management and treatment services, but preventive care as well. Moreover, the Scheme's services address the full spectrum of chronic patients' health needs, including those who need expensive drugs.

Lastly, the Scheme would enable both integration of the public and private sectors in delivering health care services as well as enhance the linkage between primary care and specialist services. Therefore, OHKF advises that the Government adopt and implement the Chronic Disease Management Voucher Scheme as one effort to develop a more holistic and equitable healthcare system in Hong Kong.

We hope the successful implementation of the Chronic Disease Management Voucher Scheme can be an additional mechanism for how chronic patients access the essential medicines that they are righted to. Thank you again for your time and we look forward to further discuss.

Sincerely,

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