

Family Council

The Chief Executive's 2025 Policy Address: Primary Healthcare Policy Initiatives of the Health Bureau

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the key primary healthcare initiatives announced in the 2025 Policy Address.

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE INITIATIVES

Introduction of a Bill for the Empowerment of the Primary Healthcare Commission (PHCC)

2. To strengthen the regulatory framework of primary healthcare, the Health Bureau (HHB) is in the process of preparing the drafting instructions for the new legislation in relation to PHCC, with a view to introducing a bill to the Legislative Council within 2026. The legislation will give PHCC the authority and statutory powers, including defining primary healthcare service providers, auditing and monitoring the service quality of relevant personnel, setting relevant service standards applicable to private primary healthcare service providers and establishing a quality assurance mechanism for primary healthcare services. The aim is to ensure that the primary healthcare system aligns with the Government's overall primary healthcare policy direction and achieves the intended health outcomes.

The Hospital Authority (HA) Family Medicine Out-patient (FMOP) preventive screening and care services

3. In line with the recommendations of the Primary Healthcare Blueprint to tackle the challenges brought about by an ageing population and the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases, the PHCC and the HA are in the process of repositioning the HA's primary healthcare services to prioritise caring for the underprivileged groups, by providing them with comprehensive primary healthcare services through a Family Medicine (FM) service model. To signify the service model and embody the direction of future primary healthcare

development, the HA's General Out-patient Clinic and Family Medicine Specialist Clinic services have been unified under the name of FMOP Services with effect from 11 October 2025.

4. Following the launch of Chronic Disease Co-care Pilot Scheme (CDCC Pilot Scheme) and the integration of the Department of Health's (DH) primary healthcare services into the district health network, the Government is gradually strengthening preventive care services for the underprivileged groups in HA FMOP. Since end-March 2025, the HA has gradually introduced CDCC Pilot Scheme "three highs" screening and management services and women's health services in selected Family Medicine Clinics (FMCs) to eligible underprivileged groups (including Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme recipients, Old Age Living Allowance (OALA) recipients aged 75 or above, or holders of valid Certificate for Waiver of Medical Charges), based on the Life Course Preventive Care approach. The HA's FMOP services will further extend its scope to cover more preventive care services for underprivileged groups alongside the development of primary healthcare. Meanwhile, eligible HA FMOP patients will be invited to join the CDCC Pilot Scheme, in order to encourage more affordable groups to utilise Government-subsidised primary healthcare services and pair with Family Doctors in the community.

5. The HA FMCs provide services with over five million consultation quotas annually. Given the ageing population, demand for FMOP services is projected to rise further. The HA will continue to review the service needs, particularly those of the underprivileged groups, and will gradually strengthen its FMOP service capacity by deploying resources in a targeted manner to increase clinic quotas in districts with greater demand, as well as regularise the current extended FMOP service hours.

Chronic Disease Co-care Platform (CDCC Platform)

6. Following the three-year pilot phase of the CDCC Pilot Scheme, the Government plans to expand and deepen the initiative by transforming it to a CDCC Platform. The Platform will build on the existing framework for diabetes mellitus and hypertension management, integrate primary healthcare resources, and cover more types of chronic diseases, having regard to considerations such as scientific evidence and resource utilisation. More health empowerment elements and preventive care programmes will also be added to establish a more systematic and coherent integrated primary healthcare platform in the community. The CDCC Platform will consolidate the existing dual-track approach of the primary healthcare system and adopt a multi-pronged approach to promote preventive services. The District Health Centres (DHCs) and family doctors (FDs) will become important pillars of the CDCC Platform, through

which the public can have more convenient access to Government-subsidised primary healthcare services to further improve their overall health conditions.

Hepatitis B screening programme

7. To strengthen the role of primary healthcare in the prevention and control of infectious diseases and as a pilot arrangement, the Government will commence a risk-based hepatitis B screening programme (the Programme) through the CDCC Platform. The Programme will follow the co-payment model and FD system of the Platform to provide risk-based hepatitis B screening and ongoing management for individuals at higher risk of hepatitis B virus infection (e.g. family members of chronic hepatitis B (CHB) patients), so as to allow suitable patients to receive ongoing management services in the community. This measure will help fill the existing gap in early identification and treatment of CHB to reduce the risk of complications (such as cirrhosis and liver cancer). The details of the Programme will be announced in December 2025.

Integration of Elderly Health Services

8. Building on the experience from the integration of women's health services, the PHCC will further expand the multidisciplinary primary healthcare service network through integration of other primary healthcare services under the DH in phased approach, with a view to enhancing resource efficiencies and reducing service duplication. The PHCC will commence preparations in phases starting from 2025-26 for the service integration of EHCs under the DH into the district health network.

DHC upgrading

9. DHCs and interim DHC Expresses (DHCEs) of a smaller scale have been set up in all 18 districts across the territory. PHCC will upgrade the DHCEs into DHCs in a phased approach. The DHCE in Central and Western District has been upgraded into DHCs in September 2025, and the DHCEs in Yau Tsim Mong and Eastern Districts will be upgraded into DHCs in end-October and early December 2025 respectively. As announced in the 2025 Policy Address, preparatory work will be conducted for expanding the services of DHCEs in Kwun Tong, Wan Chai and North District and preparation for the upgrading of other DHCEs will be continued, with a view to expediting the establishment of DHCs across the 18 districts in Hong Kong.

Oral health education and risk assessment

10. To support Hong Kong citizens across different age groups to manage their oral health, establish good oral hygiene habits and lifestyles, and seek regular oral check-ups and risk assessment, dental hygienists will deliver oral health education, oral hygiene instructions and risk assessment at selected DHCs/DHCEs and community settings operated by NGOs as a pilot service. Citizens may receive oral health risk assessment even if they think that their oral health is good. They can also receive personalised oral hygiene instructions, for example, selecting the cleaning tools and mastering the correct cleaning techniques for using different tools, according to their risks of oral diseases. When necessary, citizens will be referred to dental clinic for comprehensive oral check-ups and follow-up by dentists.

Enhancement of cervical cancer screening services

11. To enhance prevention-oriented women's health services, the Pilot Scheme on Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Testing of self-collected samples under the DH will be expanded to the district health network under the PHCC for enhancement of cervical cancer screening services. The HPV self-sampling service will be launched in the DHCs/DHCEs across 18 districts in 2026 as a value-added service.

Expansion of Healthy Mind Pilot Project

12. In the 2023 Policy Address, the Chief Executive proposed launching a pilot scheme at three DHCs to collaborate with community organisations to provide mental health assessment for the public, enabling early follow-up and referral of high-risk cases. The Government launched the Health Mind Pilot Project (Pilot Project) at three DHCs/DHCEs since August 2024, offering free preliminary mental health assessments to members of the public on a trial basis at the community level.

13. Under the Pilot Project, trained staff from DHCs/DHCEs will conduct preliminary mental health questionnaire assessments for members aged 18 or above while conducting health risk assessments for them. The preliminary assessments will assess the members' risks of emotional distress in relation to depression or anxiety. Members preliminarily assessed to have mild symptoms of depression or anxiety will be referred to service providers in the same district under the Pilot Project for further assessments and follow-up. These providers will conduct further emotional assessments for the cases and offer evidence-based low-intensity psychological therapy to those with mild to moderate symptoms of anxiety or depression symptoms, and guided self-help treatment

sessions to guide participants in practising emotional regulation strategies. Members assessed to be at high risk will be advised to consult the Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness or arranged to receive multidisciplinary support services in the community for more comprehensive and professional care and support.

14. As of August 31, 2025 three DHCs/DHCEs have simultaneously completed preliminary mental health assessments under the Pilot Project for approximately 29 000 members of the public while conducting health assessments. Including members who participated through activities organised by the service providers, approximately 4 450 participants were recommended to receive further assessment and follow-up care. Of these participants who underwent further assessment, over 1 500 participants are currently receiving or have already received low-intensity psychological treatment.

15. The Government announced in the 2025 Policy Address that six more centres (a total of nine DHCs/DHCEs) will be added as pilot sites, with follow-up services to be provided by practitioners with an academic background and training in fields such as psychology or counselling.

Enhancement of health education and services for women during pregnancy and antenatal and postnatal stages

16. The DHCs/DHCEs have been playing the role as primary healthcare service hubs and case managers. To align with the Government's initiative to encourage childbirth, the DHCs/DHCEs will provide relevant health information to women and their family members who are planning for pregnancy, with the aim of promoting overall health in preparation for pregnancy starting from the 2nd quarter of 2026. At the same time, the DHCs/DHCEs will also provide prenatal and postnatal information and related services for pregnant women and their family members such as free group classes conducted by multidisciplinary team of nurses, physiotherapists and dietitians, to support women in maintaining a healthy lifestyle during the prenatal and postnatal periods.

ADVICE SOUGHT

17. Members are invited to note the content of the presentation and provide comments.

Health Bureau
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