



INTERVIEW OF DR. TONY KO

IHF Governing Council Member
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I hold the position of Director (Cluster Services) at the Hospital Authority (HA) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Being the major provider of public healthcare services, HA plays an instrumental role in Hong Kong in safeguarding the health of the community. For the public, we are a reassuring and trusted face to turn for meeting their medical needs during the different phases of life and at times of illness. Our services are provided following the principle that no person should be prevented through lack of means from obtaining adequate medical treatment, as stipulated in the HA Ordinance. Hence, a comprehensive range of highly subsidized preventative, curative and rehabilitation healthcare services are provided to patients through our networks of hospitals, specialist outpatient clinics (SOPC), general outpatient clinics (GOPC) and community outreach services.



KEY CHALLENGES FOR SERVICE DELIVERY IN HONG KONG

Hong Kong has a twin-track healthcare system encompassing the public and private sectors. The public sector is the predominant provider of secondary and tertiary healthcare services. With Hong Kong's population of over 7.4 million (2017 figure), sustaining our human capital is a critical challenge. Currently, HA employs less than half of the doctors and nurses in Hong Kong but is managing nearly 90% of the city's in-patients. The public healthcare sector in Hong Kong is under immense pressure, and there are various challenges which HA alone cannot resolve.

KEY CHALLENGES IN HEALTHCARE ON THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

HA has made considerable progress in developing and enhancing public healthcare services over the years. However, like many healthcare systems around the world, HA is facing a number of interrelated challenges now and in the future. Hong Kong is facing an increasingly complex set of challenges in its mission to provide high-quality medical care. Issues such as the aging population, escalating incidence of chronic diseases and recurring threat of global pandemics must all be adequately addressed while we work to keep pace with rising patient expectations and advances in medical practice and technology.

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EXPECTATIONS FROM AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE IHF

IHF is a global arena for worldwide healthcare providers and associations to connect and enhance fruitful discussions in different healthcare aspects. From sharing of good practices in patient care, knowledge exchange, the partnership to modern hospital management, we benefit a lot by being a member of IHF, which is instrumental to sustainable and efficient healthcare service provision in our region.

The role of IHF will become more and more important in the future in the face of the prevalence of chronic diseases and the aging population. Population aging is poised to become one of the most significant social transformations of the twenty-first century. The impact on the healthcare sector is unavoidable. IHF can help strengthen collaborations for more exchange of knowledge and strategic experience, especially in the enhancement of service model and use of technology for service provision, to cope with the worldwide aging problem. Through the global network provided by IHF, hospital and healthcare associations around the world can share and discuss more future trends of healthcare and strengthen collaborations among members.



醫院管理局
HOSPITAL
AUTHORITY

TWIN-TRACK HEALTHCARE SYSTEM IN HONG KONG

Hong Kong has a twin-track healthcare system by which the public and private healthcare sectors complement each other. The highly subsidized public hospital system provides the people of Hong Kong with equitable access to healthcare services with well-recognized quality at a very affordable price, as well as to provide comprehensive public health programs and serves essential public health functions including preventing and preparing against communicable diseases. The private sector provides the public with a variety of choice of different healthcare services, including affordable primary medical care as well as a range of specialist and hospital care.

HA now manages 43 public hospitals and institutions, 49 SOPCs and 73 GOPCs throughout Hong Kong.

ABOUT THE HONG KONG HOSPITAL AUTHORITY

The HA is a statutory body established under the HA Ordinance (Cap. 113) of Hong Kong in 1990 and is responsible for managing the entire public hospital system in Hong Kong, which is primarily funded by Government subvention. HA now manages 43 public hospitals and institutions, 49 SOPCs and 73 GOPCs throughout Hong Kong. GOPCs offer general healthcare and medical services to patients in need, while SOPCs strive to provide ever-better standards of treatment by keeping pace with the latest medical and scientific advances.

A key feature of the management and organization structure of HA is its cluster arrangement, which aims to establish a clear line of accountability for the operations of all hospitals in clusters, achieve integration and collaboration amongst various clinical services in clusters, ensure the most cost-effective use of resources within and between clusters, optimising and leveraging economies of scale in management services/functions (e.g. human resources, supplies chain, facility management) among various hospitals in the same cluster, and develop community-based healthcare services with other healthcare providers in the districts.

To provide high-quality patient-centered healthcare services, HA has developed a key performance indicator (KPI) framework. Through performance monitoring and benchmarking, KPIs help to flag up issues for special attention, identify areas for service improvement, and provide direction for capacity building and resource allocation

HA'S STRATEGIC PLANNING

To map out the strategic directions of HA to cope with the challenges, HA has formulated the HA Strategic Plan 2017-2022, which sets out three main strategic foci about the service, workforce, and financial aspects to address the key issues it faces. HA is developing new service models by leveraging on technology and through service transformation so that the healthcare needs are managed in more efficient and effective ways. It also highlights the strategic focus on providing patient-centered care, which means designing, organizing and delivering our services from the patient's point of view and according to their needs. Driving accountable and efficient use of financial resources through improving financial planning and enhancing the transparency and equity of resource allocation are also high on the agenda of HA.

To rise to its coming challenges, HA adopts IT Innovations as key enablers for modernizing care delivery to alleviate the ever-increasing demand on public healthcare services. With a "Smart Hospital" vision in mind, HA will continue to enhance its IT solutions and innovations for improving patient experience and service efficiency. In addition, we will help to deliver IT systems in support of future healthcare service delivery which bridges the public and private healthcare information gap; and enhances corporate IT systems relating to various functions including human resources, finance management as well as capital works planning. HA is also piloting a Data Collaboration Lab to provide a secured collaboration platform between HA and the research community to access HA's clinical data and conduct data collaboration projects. All these, we trust, can help improve services and promote healthcare innovations.

To cater for the growing healthcare demand arising from an aging population and to improve existing services, the Hong Kong Government has worked with the HA to devise the ten-year Hospital Development Plans (HDPs) by two phases since 2016. With the policy and funding support from the Government, HA has commenced implementation of the first HDP to provide additional public hospital beds and operating theatres. To ensure that future hospital development can proceed expeditiously, HA has also identified several hospital projects and the Community Health Centre project for inclusion in the second HDP. Upon completion of the first and the second ten-year HDPs, there will be a planned increased capacity of additional beds and other additional hospital facilities that will largely meet the projected service demand up to 2036.

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