

# Hong Kong Cancer Strategy 2019

Summary  
Report



衛生署  
Department of Health



食物及衛生局  
Food and Health Bureau



醫院管理局  
HOSPITAL  
AUTHORITY



This publication has been translated into Chinese. If there is any inconsistency or ambiguity between the English version and the Chinese version, the English version shall prevail.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

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# Foreword



**Prof. Sophia CHAN Siu-chee, JP**

Secretary for Food and Health

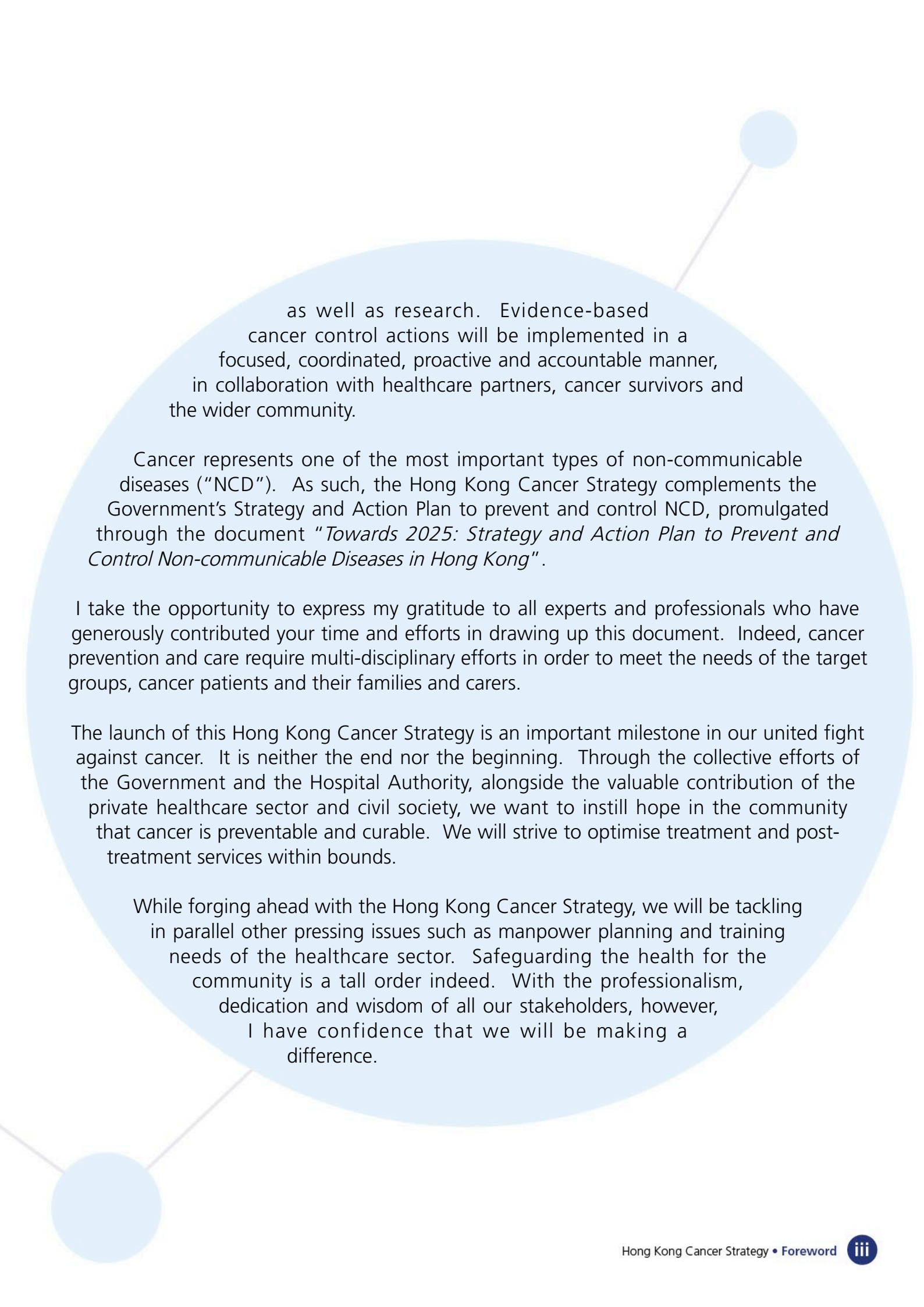
Cancer is the top killer in Hong Kong. On average, cancer took the lives of over 35 individuals from their loved ones every day in the past five years. With a growing and ageing population, the number of new cancer cases and related healthcare burden is set to rise. Nevertheless, from 1981 to 2018, the overall age-standardised mortality rates for all cancers have gradually decreased after an initial steady state. Medical advances have made possible earlier diagnosis and more effective treatments. Lifestyle changes are also instrumental to the prevention of certain cancer types.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is clearly committed to stepping up the prevention and control of cancer and the support for cancer patients and their carers. It is our goal to reduce the hit rate of cancer, to provide the most effective and timely cancer screening and treatment to all in need, to offer the most reassuring support services to survivors and their carers, and to build up our capacity – through surveillance, investment in technology, building alliances with patient groups, research, etc., in the collective fight against this disease.

The Hong Kong Cancer Strategy is the first attempt to offer a holistic plan for cancer prevention and control for Hong Kong. The strategy seeks to provide more appropriate and timely intervention to people with and without symptoms of cancer at a population level, reducing the agony and anxieties amongst the affected and ultimately enhancing their quality of life.

Through the Hong Kong Cancer Strategy, we identify service gaps and set strategic priorities and direction for possible stages throughout a patient's complex journey, from prevention and screening, early detection and diagnosis, treatment, survivorship, to palliative care. We take on a greater role in making available resources to support people living with cancer. We review how cancer-related policies should be more effectively supported through collection of data, technology,





as well as research. Evidence-based cancer control actions will be implemented in a focused, coordinated, proactive and accountable manner, in collaboration with healthcare partners, cancer survivors and the wider community.

Cancer represents one of the most important types of non-communicable diseases ("NCD"). As such, the Hong Kong Cancer Strategy complements the Government's Strategy and Action Plan to prevent and control NCD, promulgated through the document *"Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong"*.

I take the opportunity to express my gratitude to all experts and professionals who have generously contributed your time and efforts in drawing up this document. Indeed, cancer prevention and care require multi-disciplinary efforts in order to meet the needs of the target groups, cancer patients and their families and carers.

The launch of this Hong Kong Cancer Strategy is an important milestone in our united fight against cancer. It is neither the end nor the beginning. Through the collective efforts of the Government and the Hospital Authority, alongside the valuable contribution of the private healthcare sector and civil society, we want to instill hope in the community that cancer is preventable and curable. We will strive to optimise treatment and post-treatment services within bounds.

While forging ahead with the Hong Kong Cancer Strategy, we will be tackling in parallel other pressing issues such as manpower planning and training needs of the healthcare sector. Safeguarding the health for the community is a tall order indeed. With the professionalism, dedication and wisdom of all our stakeholders, however, I have confidence that we will be making a difference.

# Preface



**Dr Constance CHAN Hon-ye, JP**

Director of Health

Cancer is the second leading cause of death globally and is an important public health issue in Hong Kong. It claimed nearly one-third of the total deaths in the local population in 2018. Given the ageing population and changes in lifestyle, the number of new cancer cases is expected to increase further in coming decades.

Prevention is better than cure. As cancer and other non-communicable diseases (“NCD”) share many common risk factors like smoking, alcohol consumption, unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity, overweight and obesity, promoting adoption of healthy lifestyle is the primary strategy for prevention of NCD including cancer. On this front, the Government had launched the *“Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong”* in May 2018 and multi-sectoral actions throughout the life course were emphasised. The Department of Health (“DH”) will continue to work in collaboration with various sectors to promote healthy lifestyle. On top of the universal hepatitis B virus vaccination, the DH will also introduce human papillomavirus vaccination targeting Primary Five school girls from the 2019/20 school year for preventing cervical cancer.

In addition to primary prevention, the DH has launched screening programmes for cervical cancer and colorectal cancer, and will continue to implement evidence-based screening programmes at a population level.

Fighting against cancer requires concerted effort from various sectors. Everyone can make a difference to prevent and control cancer. Let us all work hand in hand to improve the health of all in Hong Kong!



**Dr LEUNG Pak-yin, JP**

Chief Executive, Hospital Authority

The healthcare scene in Hong Kong has been going through significant changes in the past as a result of the fast growing and ageing population and increasing complexity of diseases. Facing the formidable challenges presented by the high rising service demand, collaboration with different stakeholders is key to the sustainable development of healthcare services in Hong Kong.

Cancer, as the top killer in Hong Kong, is posing huge and growing burden to the healthcare system. Such burden also includes the high cost of cancer care not only for the patients but also the society as a whole. To reduce such burden, an effective system that promotes prevention as well as early detection and timely treatment is indispensable.

Working along the Government's direction of stepping up the prevention and control of cancer and the support for cancer patients and their carers, the Hospital Authority ("HA") has formulated specific strategies along the cancer care journey to attain early detection and diagnosis, timely and effective cancer treatment, and seamless transitional care for cancer survivors and end-of-life patients in this Hong Kong Cancer Strategy. In parallel, the HA is developing a Strategic Service Framework for Cancer Services to ensure that the development of cancer services in the HA aligns with the future direction of cancer services in Hong Kong as a whole.

Sustainable and quality cancer service requires joint effort from the public and private healthcare sectors as well as non-governmental organisations. I look forward to the continuing collaboration with different stakeholders in actualising this Cancer Strategy in the years to come, and building a healthier community together.



# Why Hong Kong Cancer Strategy?

Devise a  
systematic and  
holistic plan to  
address rising  
cancer burden

Identify  
screening needs

Improve  
treatment  
services

Improve  
quality of life  
for patients  
living with and  
beyond cancer

Enhance  
surveillance and  
research

Invest in  
technology  
and embrace  
collaboration

Promote  
cancer prevention  
through  
effective health  
communication



# Our Vision and Mission



## Our Vision

To reduce cancer burden in the local population, improve the quality of life and survivorship of cancer patients.

## Our Mission

- To reduce the incidence and mortality of cancer in Hong Kong;
- To adopt a holistic approach for the care of patients;
- To improve the quality of life of cancer patients through better access to evidence-based prevention, screening, early detection and diagnosis, effective treatment and care as well as palliative care;
- To transform the concept of care for survivors and perceive cancer as a chronic illness; and
- To capitalise on innovation and technology, surveillance system, scientific research, as well as partnership and resources in the community to support policy making and service delivery.

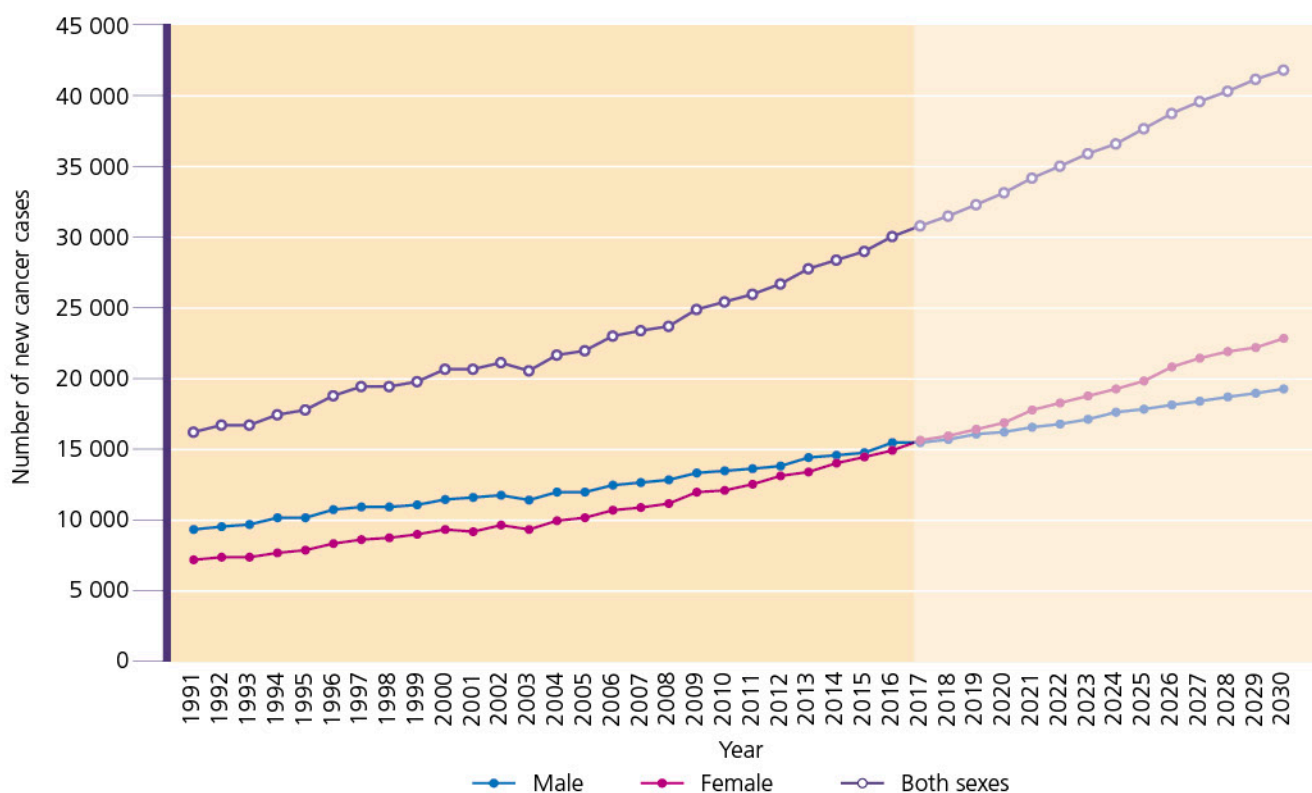
# Cancer Facts and Figures

**Death:** Cancer is the top killer in Hong Kong. In 2018, cancer claimed 14 446 lives, accounting for about one third of the total deaths in the local population.<sup>1</sup>

On average, cancer took the lives of over **35 individuals** every day in the past five years.

**Increasing Burden:** The number of **new cancer cases** has been on a rising trend, increasing at a rate of about 2.9% per annum in the past decade. The number of new cancer cases in Hong Kong hit a historical high of 31 468 in 2016.

Number of new cancer cases and projections to 2030

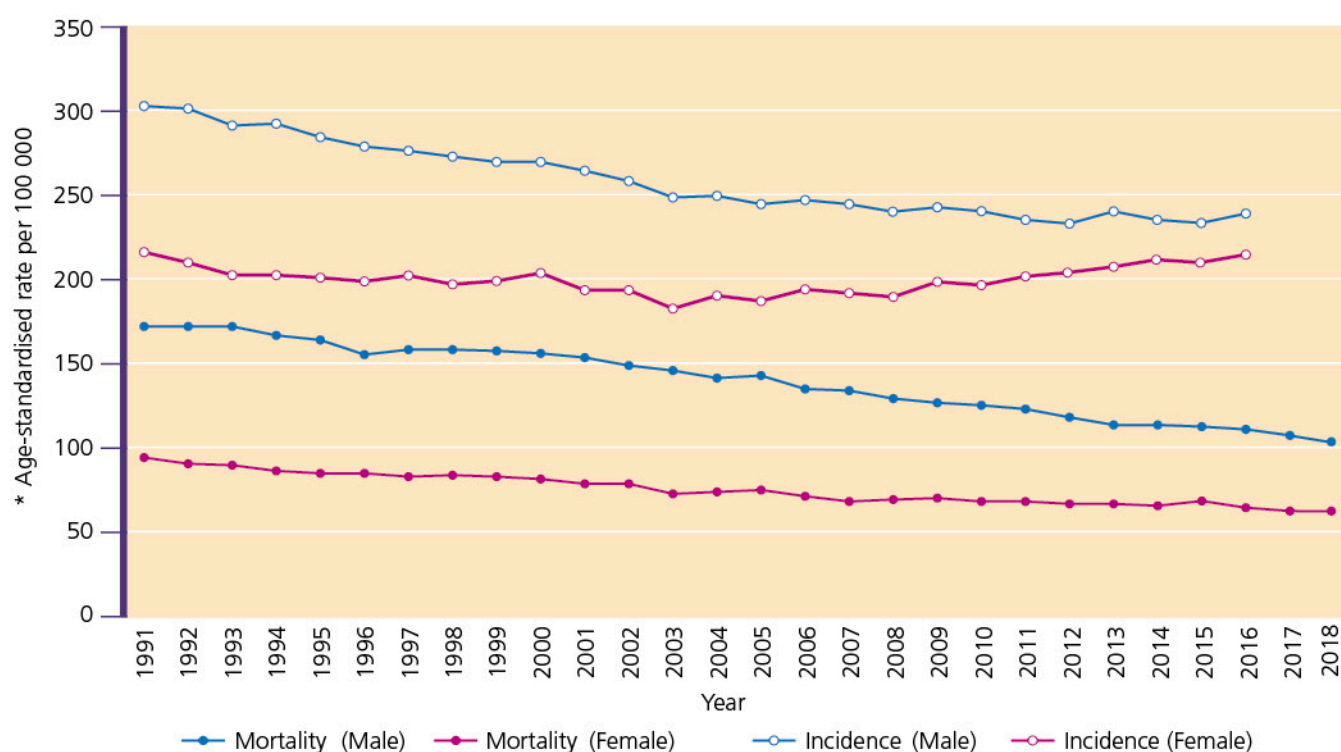


<sup>1</sup> Provisional figures

Over the past quarter century, the **age-standardised incidence rate** ("ASIR") for all cancers has been falling in males while the initial decline of ASIR in females observed in the early years has reverted to an upward trend in the past decade.

With the prevailing trends in incidence and population structure, the annual number of new cancer cases is projected to increase by around 35% to more than 42 000 by 2030 from current level.

### Age-standardised incidence and mortality rates of all cancers by sex



\* Rates are standardised to the Segi's world standard population (Segi, 1960)

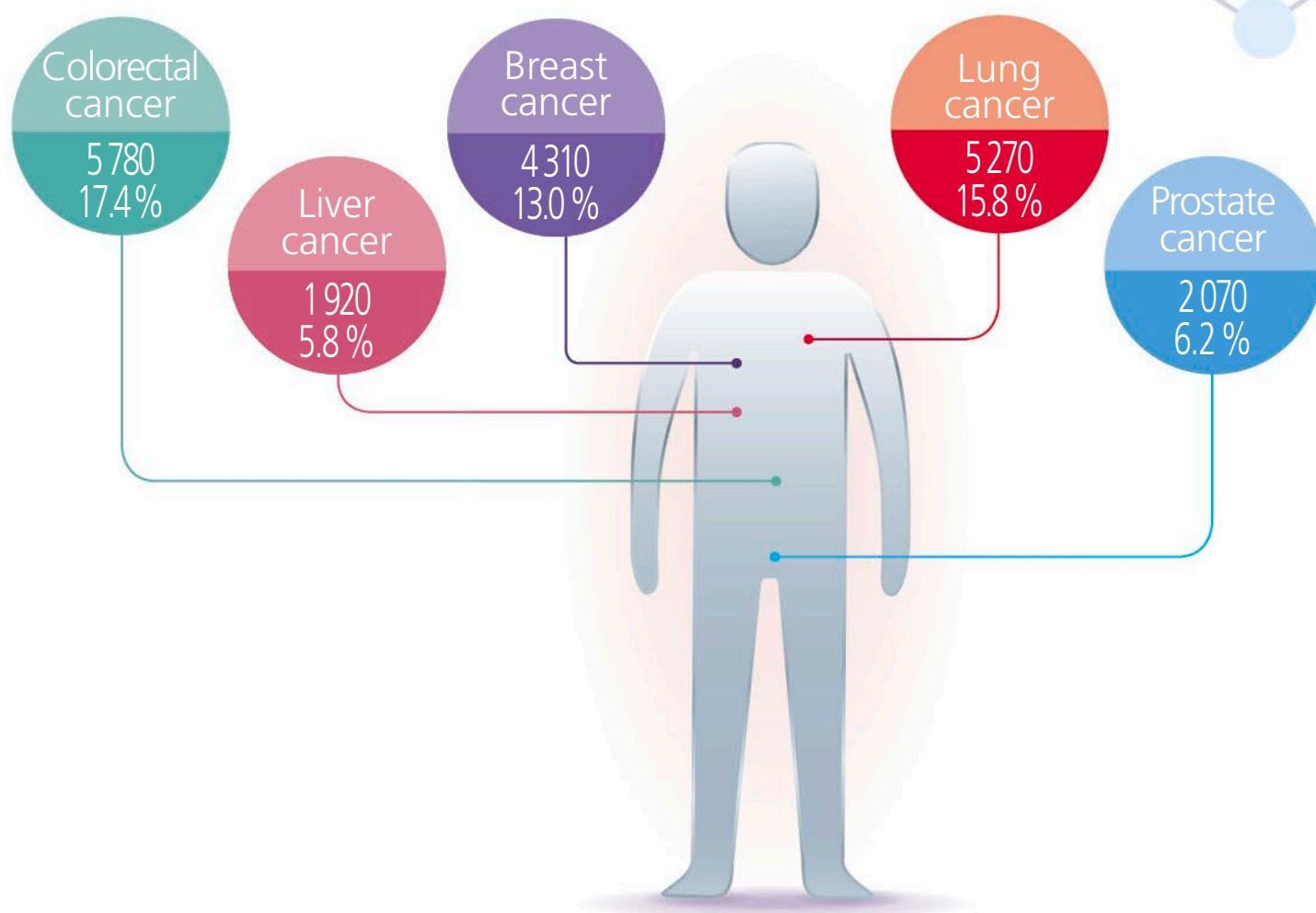
Source: Hong Kong Cancer Registry, Department of Health, Census and Statistics Department

# Cancer Facts and Figures

## Top five leading cancers

The five most frequent cancers expected for both genders combined in 2018 would be colorectal cancer, lung cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer and liver cancer.

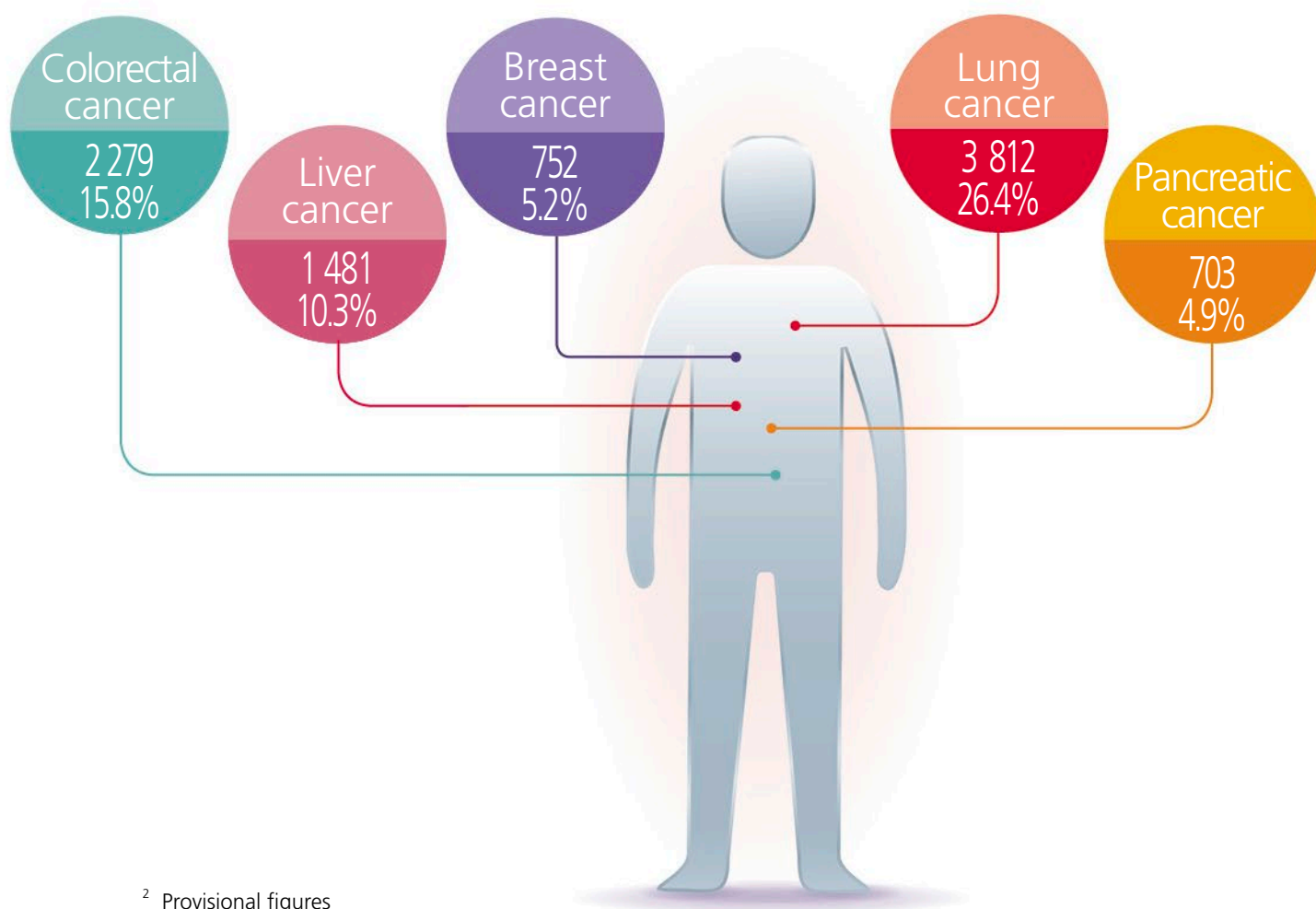
These five leading cancers comprised over half (58.1%) of all cancer new cases projected.





Lung cancer,  
colorectal cancer and  
liver cancer made up  
52.4% of all cancer deaths  
in 2018.<sup>2</sup>

### Five leading causes of registered cancer deaths, 2018<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Provisional figures

# What to Expect?

## General Public and Community Partners

- An online resource hub with accurate and reliable cancer-related information to be developed
- More comprehensive cancer statistics to be compiled by the Hong Kong Cancer Registry and made available in a more timely manner
- Medical-social collaboration with the engagement of community partners to be enhanced
- New platform to be established to enhance communication between the Government and the civil society on cancer-related matters





## Patients and Carers

- Streamlined cancer-specific diagnostic service will be piloted for selected cancer type(s) with coordinated assessments and investigations
- Cancer Case Manager Programme to be extended to cover more cancer types
- Investment in advanced medical technology and equipment for cancer treatment to be stepped up
- Drug formulary to continue to be updated in a timely manner so that more cancer drugs of proven safety and efficacy can be made available
- Safety net coverage for self-financed drugs to continue to be enhanced so as to better support cancer patients with financial needs

## Healthcare Sector

- More effective communication between private and public sectors on referral of cancer cases
- More research and promotion projects on cancer

# How to Achieve?

Seeking Early  
Diagnosis

Offering  
Timely and  
Effective  
Treatment

Staying  
Well

Investing  
in Technology

Joining  
Hands

Enhancing  
Surveillance  
and Research  
Capabilities

Reducing  
Cancer  
Risks and  
Providing  
Screening



## ...Reducing Cancer Risks and Providing Screening

### Direction

- Upstream approach
- Evidence-based strategies
  - Primary healthcare focused
  - Empowerment of people and communities

### Strategies

#### Primary Prevention

- Reducing risk factors for cancer prevention, such as tobacco use, alcohol use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet and obesity

#### Secondary Prevention

- Providing population-based screening based on evidence with reference to the recommendations of Cancer Expert Working Group on Cancer Prevention and Screening

#### Strengthening primary healthcare services

- Providing comprehensive person-centred care including health assessment, promotion and communication such as advisory services on cancer prevention through District Health Centres



## ... Seeking Early Diagnosis



### Direction

Through early detection and diagnosis –

- Simplify treatment courses
- Improve survival rates

### Strategies

- Provide early risk assessment
- Enhance referral communications
- Enhance triage system and streamline diagnostic procedures
- Explore collaboration with the private sector
- Introduce new technology for diagnosis

How  
to Achieve?

## ... Offering Timely and Effective Treatment



Direction

Through an effective integrated service model with innovative and modernised cancer services –

- Improve patient outcome
- Reduce morbidity and mortality

Strategies

- Provide optimal and patient-centred treatment and care
- Augment service capacity with better coordination
- Provide more and better drugs and treatment
- Modernise treatment technology and infrastructure

## ...Staying Well



### Direction

Through strengthened support to cancer survivors and provision of palliative and end-of-life care –

- Improve quality of life for patients with and beyond cancer
- Help cancer survivors stay healthy in the community

### Strategies

- Initiate a refer-back mechanism in a primary care setting to public hospitals
- Engage community partners to reinforce medical-social collaboration and enhance the community support for patients and carers
- Establish a sustainable service model for survivors
- Enhance support for end-of-life patients



## ... Investing in Technology

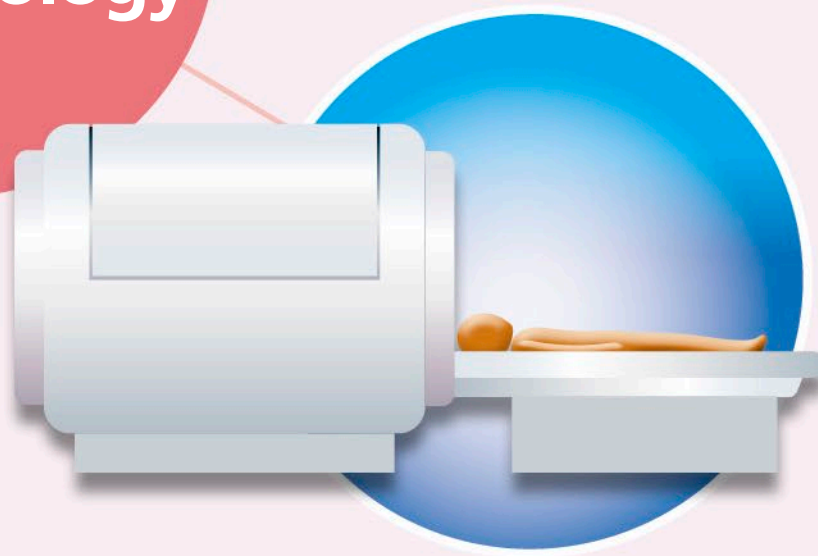
### Direction

Through investments in technology –

- Improve prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer
- Enhance health communication and support to patients and carers

### Strategies

- Offer state-of-the art technology with proven clinical efficacy and effectiveness in prevention and control of cancer
- Develop an online resource hub to provide accurate and reliable health information related to cancer
- Pool together community resources for patients and carers to fight against cancer



## ... Joining Hands



We will set up a platform involving the civil society to pool together, align, and utilise these resources, with a view to identifying the most needed service gaps, filling mismatches, minimising duplication of services, and achieving economies of scale.

### **Cancer Coordinating Committee of Food and Health Bureau**

Planning and development  
of cancer prevention and  
control strategies

### **Research Office of Food and Health Bureau**

Fund cancer-related  
research and health  
promotion projects

### **Department of Health**

Safeguarding community  
health through a range of  
promotional, preventive,  
screening and health  
protection interventions  
and services

### **Food and Health Bureau**

Overall policy  
formulation and  
allocation of  
resources

### **Community Groups and Civil Society**

More partnership and  
collaboration on the  
way

### **Hospital Authority**

Delivery of cancer  
service through a cluster-  
based approach, with  
a cross-specialty/  
disciplinary service  
system

### **Hong Kong Cancer Registry**

Collection and provision  
of surveillance data

## ... Enhancing Surveillance and Research Capabilities



We aim to support our planning and steering of cancer policy through rigorous surveillance and continuous research.

By expanding the role of the Hong Kong Cancer Registry, we seek to capture quality and more comprehensive data (such as stage-specific survival rates) in a timely manner, so as to track areas that we need to work on and to assess impact of existing programmes. We will work closely with the private healthcare service providers to collect relevant data.

Cancer data will also be disseminated in a more user-friendly way for educational and research purposes.

We will strengthen our research capabilities to provide scientific evidence to inform and evaluate policies.

Novel research areas such as genetics and genomics for personalised medicine, in particular target therapies for different tumours, will be given funding priority.

We will also nurture local researchers to pursue further related studies in the long run.

We will give funding priority to studies on implementation science to help integrating research findings into clinical practice.

# Expected Outcome by 2025 at a Glance

## Surveillance

- (i) shorten the current time lag in the reporting of annual cancer statistics from 22/ 23 months to 20 months
- (ii) capture, compile and report high-quality stage data for the ten prevalent cancers
- (iii) compile and report stage-specific survival rates of the ten prevalent cancers
- (iv) expand access to the data through a dedicated website

## Prevention and Screening

- (i) a 25% relative reduction in risk of premature mortality from non-communicable diseases including cancers
- (ii) at least 10% relative reduction in prevalence of binge drinking and harmful use of alcohol among adults and in the prevalence of drinking among youth
- (iii) a 10% relative reduction in prevalence of insufficient physical activity among adolescents and adults
- (iv) a 30% relative reduction in prevalence of current tobacco use in persons aged 15 or above
- (v) a halt to the rise in obesity
- (vi) vaccination coverage of hepatitis B vaccine maintained at  $\geq 95\%$
- (vii) interim target of 70% coverage for completion of two doses of human papillomavirus vaccination among the first cohort
- (viii) a 10% relative increase in coverage for cervical cancer screening
- (ix) a 30% relative increase in coverage for colorectal cancer screening

## Early Detection and Diagnosis

- (i) introduce a cancer-specific checklist to help patients receive investigations in a more timely manner and confirm the diagnosis at an earlier stage
- (ii) pilot the streamlined cancer specific diagnostic service for selected cancer type(s)
- (iii) support patient profile tracking and facilitate an integrated review of investigation results across different clinical systems with the support of information technology
- (iv) establish the big data and machine learning infrastructure for image artificial intelligence (“AI”) development and clinical AI service deployment for operation



## Timely and Effective Treatment

- (i) continue to review and expand the coverage of cancer drugs in the HA Drug Formulary
- (ii) develop service model for satellite chemotherapy centre and pilot the model in selected cluster(s)
- (iii) develop and launch additional Cancer Case Manager Programmes
- (iv) roll out nurse clinics and clinical pharmacist service for cancer services in all clusters
- (v) introduce advanced medical technology for cancer treatment (for example, treatment planning and delivery system and robotic surgery, etc.) in all clusters
- (vi) increase the number of and upgrade Linear Accelerator facilities according to the projected service demand
- (vii) reserve extra space in new hospitals/oncology centres to facilitate the installation of advanced medical equipment and facilities
- (viii) modernise treatment facilities such as establishing oncology centre, enhancing radiology services and increasing the number of Operational Theatres through the Ten-year Hospital Development Plan

## Technology and Support

- (i) upgrade and acquire medical equipment of different clinical areas and introduce evidence-based advanced or new medical technology for different treatment modalities
- (ii) create a dedicated online resource hub to enhance health communications and to serve as a centralised directory to inform the public of cancer-related relevant resources
- (iii) set up a platform involving the civil society with a view to working towards optimal models in benefitting more cancer patients and carers

## Survivorship and Palliative Care

- (i) empower patients by developing a medical-social collaboration model
- (ii) introduce a fast-track refer-back mechanism so that cancer survivors can have ready access to HA's cancer care team if need be
- (iii) define the role and scope of multi-disciplinary team support, including allied health services for survivorship
- (iv) establish and pilot the collaboration model for Oncology specialist outpatient clinics and Family Medicine/ general outpatient clinics for survivorship
- (v) enhance structured rehabilitation and supportive care programme for survivors
- (vi) enhance palliative care support for patients approaching end-of-life

## Research

- (i) support about 300 investigator-initiated research and health promotion projects for better prevention and control of cancer
- (ii) support about 30 awardees under the Research Fellowship Scheme addressing the risk factors of cancer

# Useful Links

## Surveillance

### **Hong Kong Cancer Registry**

<http://www3.ha.org.hk/cancereg/>



## Prevention and Screening

### **Toward 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control NCD in Hong Kong**

<https://www.change4health.gov.hk/en/saptowards2025/publications.html>



### **Information about Cancer at Website of the Centre for Health Protection**

<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/25/31932.html>



### **Cervical Screening Programme**

<https://www.cervicalscreening.gov.hk/eindex.php>



### **Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme**

<https://www.colonscreen.gov.hk/en/public/index.html>



## Patient Care and Support

### **Smart Patient Website**

<http://www21.ha.org.hk/smartpatient/SPW/en-US/Home/>



## Research

### **Health and Medical Research Fund**

<https://rfs2.fhb.gov.hk/english/welcome/welcome.html>



For the full version of the  
Hong Kong Cancer Strategy,  
please visit

**Website of  
the Food and Health Bureau**

[www.fhb.gov.hk](http://www.fhb.gov.hk)



**Website of  
the Centre for Health Protection,  
Department of Health**

[www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/  
content/25/101795.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/healthtopics/content/25/101795.html)



**Website of  
the Hospital Authority**

[www.ha.org.hk/visitor/  
ha\\_index.asp](http://www.ha.org.hk/visitor/ha_index.asp)



