

## Chapter 2 THE FIRST STAGE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

2.1 Healthcare concerns every member of the society. The Government is committed to involving all stakeholders through a step-by-step approach to build a consensus to reform the healthcare system aiming to improve it and make it sustainable. We have thus divided the consultation into stages and initiated the first stage consultation through the Consultation Document.

2.2 At the first stage consultation, we consulted the public on –

- (a) the key principles and concepts of our service reform proposals (those in paragraphs 1.7(a) to 1.7(d) above); and
- (b) the pros and cons of six proposed supplementary financing options (those in paragraphs 1.7(e)(i) to 1.7(e)(vi) above).

The three months' consultation period of the first stage public consultation on healthcare reform ended on 13 June 2008.

2.3 **We would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the community and various organizations for their valuable opinions expressed during the consultation period. They have put forward constructive views on both services reforms and supplementary financing proposals, which have helped us better understand public expectations for the Healthcare Reform.**

2.4 During the consultation period, we widely publicised the Healthcare Reform and the Consultation Document through an intensive publicity campaign. We engaged extensively different sectors and various stakeholders in the community through various briefings and forums to explain the healthcare reform proposals and to listen to their views on them. We also received the views of members of the public including various stakeholders through their written submissions. As part of the consultation, we also canvassed the views of the public through various means. Below is a summary of activities that had taken place in connection with the consultation–

- (a) **General publicity:** we launched a publicity campaign on the healthcare reform, both to send the message that healthcare reform would be important to the future healthcare for every member of the society, and to invite their participation in the exercise by giving their views. We aired a series of four Announcements in the Public Interests (APIs) on both television and radio about the healthcare reform. We had over 2 300 posters at bus stops, MTR stations, trams, public hospitals and clinics, government offices, 1 200 000 postcards were distributed to the public to inform them of the healthcare reform consultation. A total of 160 000 copies of pamphlet, 160 000 copies of booklet and 50 000 copies of the consultations document were distributed to the public. We also gave out a total of over 123 000 token souvenirs to draw public attention to the health care reform.

- (b) **Legislative Council:** the Secretary for Food and Health briefed the Panel on Health Services of the Legislative Council (LegCo) and launched the healthcare reform proposals at its special meetings on 13 March 2008, and reported the consultation progress to the Panel on 7 July 2008. The Panel also held four other special meetings to discuss the proposals and to listen to the views of a total of 39 deputations on healthcare reform. Representatives of the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) attended all these special meetings to explain the proposals, to answer questions and to listen to the views of Members and the deputations. A motion debate on the healthcare reform and improvement of healthcare services was also held on 28 May 2008, with a motion carried calling for improvement to healthcare services for the public, many of which echoed the proposals for reforming healthcare services. (Please see Appendix I for information related to the special meetings, the submissions of the deputations, and the motion debate.)
- (c) **District Councils:** the Secretary for Food and Health attended all 18 District Councils (DCs) to brief them on the healthcare reform proposals and to listen to Members' views on the proposals. Members expressed actively their views on the reform and reflected the views of local communities. Amongst them, nine DCs passed motion expressing support to reform the healthcare system, and another nine DCs concluded with calls for the Government to proceed with reforms for improving healthcare services to the public. (Please see Appendix II for information related to the relevant DC meetings, the motions passed and the concluding statement of the Chairmen.)
- (d) **Briefing sessions/forums:** apart from the Legislative Council and District Council meetings, the Secretary for Food and Health and/or representatives of the FHB attended during the consultation period some 130 briefing sessions, forums and seminars on healthcare reform organized by different sectors of the community, including political parties, professional bodies, labour unions, chambers of commerce, trade associations, social welfare organizations, district organizations and community groups. These occasions provided the opportunity for the Government to explain the healthcare reform proposals, as well as for the Government to listen to the views expressed and exchanged by various interested parties and members of the public. (Please see Appendix III for a list of the briefing sessions, forums and seminars attended.)
- (e) **Written submissions:** the Government received a total of 4 906 submissions on healthcare reform from individuals and organizations by email, post, facsimile, etc. These included 1 182 submissions from individuals, 262 submissions from organizations and 3 462 self-designed standard forms. (Please see Appendix IV for a list of all written submissions received and the originators (except where the originator requested to remain anonymous).) Copies of the submissions are available on the Healthcare Reform website (<http://www.beStrong.gov.hk>), except where the originator requested not to make public the submission. In addition, we have also monitored commentaries and opinions expressed in the media and have taken these into account when analyzing the public responses.

- (f) **Questionnaire surveys and focus groups:** to facilitate collation and assessment of views on the healthcare reform proposals, we commissioned independent consultants to conduct questionnaire surveys and focus groups discussions on both service reform and financing reform and targeting both the general public and specific groups. (A brief description of the questionnaire surveys and focus groups we conducted is at Appendix V.) The detailed reports and results of the surveys and focus groups are available on the Healthcare Reform website. Meanwhile, we also have received and taken note of a number of questionnaire surveys conducted by third-parties, and made reference to these surveys when analyzing public responses to the healthcare reform.

2.5 The ensuing chapters set out our analysis of the public views expressed on the Healthcare Reform.