

Chapter 14 BUILDING A HEALTHY TOMORROW

Success Criteria of Reform

14.1 The previous chapters set out our proposals to reform the healthcare system to serve better the community. We intend to measure the success of healthcare reform by how well we achieve the following –

(a) For the public/patients –

- (i) ensure that public healthcare services remain affordable and accessible and continue to provide a sustainable safety net;
- (ii) improve the quality and value-for-money of healthcare services in both the public and private sectors;
- (iii) provide more personalized choice of services in both the public and private sectors;
- (iv) promote a culture of shared responsibility for personal health and put greater emphasis on healthy lifestyle and preventive care; and
- (v) build in incentives and safeguards that promote judicious and appropriate use of healthcare services.

(b) For the healthcare providers/workers –

- (i) ensure that professional standards and skills, quality of care, as well as healthcare facilities and technology continue to keep pace with international development;
- (ii) continue to uphold high standards of professional conduct and ethics through the professional regulatory framework and peer monitoring;
- (iii) promote healthy competition and collaboration between the public and private sectors in the market that can further enhance professional quality and cost-effectiveness of services; and
- (iv) provide a vibrant healthcare market and a working environment conducive to the provision of better healthcare services.

(c) **For the healthcare system as a whole –**

- (i) improve the health of our community continuously through more efficient and cost-effective healthcare, with more emphasis given to primary care, especially preventive care;
- (ii) ensure sustainable development of the healthcare system by overcoming the structural and financing challenges it faces;
- (iii) continue to provide a safety net of healthcare for the low-income and under-privileged groups as well as others in need; and
- (iv) ensure the effective and efficient functioning as well as healthy development of the healthcare market.

Areas to be Further Considered

Institutional Changes

14.2 We anticipate that the implementation of the reform will entail changes to the institutional arrangements under the current healthcare system, especially in supporting the reforms to the service delivery models as well as financing arrangements. We will consider the necessary changes after finalising the reform proposals for implementation. In principle, we envisage a need to distinguish the following roles within the healthcare system –

- (a) **Policy maker:** to formulate health policies and allocate public funds to implement such policies.
- (b) **Professional regulator:** to regulate the professional standards and conduct of the healthcare professions, including professional ethics.
- (c) **Professional development and training institution:** to provide the necessary training and support the continued development of healthcare professionals.
- (d) **Service standards setting body:** to set the standards for healthcare services including the quality and content of publicly-funded or subsidized healthcare services.

- (e) **Service purchaser:** to purchase publicly-funded or subsidized healthcare services from service providers, or in the case of insurance, to purchase healthcare services for the insured from both public and private services providers.
- (f) **Service provider:** to provide healthcare services up to purchasing standards while subject to regulation on professional standards and conduct.
- (g) **Service monitor and auditor:** to audit publicly-funded, subsidized or third-party purchased healthcare services provided by service providers to ensure compliance with service standards and value-for-money.
- (h) **Insurance regulator:** to regulate medical insurance offered by insurance companies for the protection of consumers.

Healthcare Manpower Planning

14.3 Following the reform and financing proposals, the Government will need to examine the issue of healthcare manpower planning, with a view to ensuring that there is sufficient manpower supply of different healthcare professions to support the sustainable development of the healthcare system in the long run, both in the public and private sectors.

Long-Term Funding Arrangement for Hospital Authority

14.4 As a result of the reform and financing proposals, particularly the proposal to redress the public-private imbalance and the introduction of supplementary financing, the Government will need to examine the long-term funding arrangement for the Hospital Authority. The purpose is to ensure sufficient funding for public healthcare services having regard to the target services provided and population served, so as to ensure that the public healthcare system and safety net services will continue to improve in quality.

Specific Areas of Healthcare Services

14.5 After finalising the reform and supplementary financing proposals to be taken forward, we shall further examine the necessary policies and measures to develop and enhance specific areas of healthcare services, including mental health services, dental services, Chinese medicine, infirmary services and long-term medical care.