

Factsheet on Healthcare Reform – Text Version

Your Health Your Life

Hong Kong People Among the Healthiest in the World

The life expectancy of Hong Kong people is among the longest in the world. According to the 2005 statistics from the World Health Organization and the Hong Kong Census and Statistics Department, the life expectancy of babies born in Hong Kong was comparable to that of Japan, which is well-known for longevity, and Australia, and was even higher than that of the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Life Expectancy (Years)

Male		Female	
Aus	79.0	Japan	85.5
HK	78.8	HK	84.6
Japan	78.7	Aus	83.7
UK	76.6	UK	81.1
USA	75.3	USA	80.4

The survival rate of newborns in Hong Kong also ranks among the best. According to the 2005 statistics from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the United States and the Hong Kong Department of Health, the infant mortality rate in Hong Kong is one of the lowest in the world!

Infant Mortality Rate

Hong Kong	2.4/1,000
Japan	2.8/1,000
Australia	5.0/1,000
United Kingdom	5.1/1,000
United States of America	6.9/1,000

Hong Kong people's good overall health is encouraging. However, our aging population will bring enormous challenges. Over the next 20 years, the ratio of the youth and adult

population to the elderly population will change drastically:

Ratio of Working Age Population to the Elderly Population:

The ratio of our working age population (aged between 15 and 64) to the elderly population (aged 65 or above) is **6:1** at present, and will become **5:1** in 10 years' time and **3:1** in 20 years' time. In the foreseeable future, there will be less and less young people who can help share the livelihood expenses (including medical expenses) of the elderly population.

Meanwhile, due to our ageing population and the use of more advanced medical technology, our overall public health expenditure is projected to increase from about \$38 billion in 2004 to about \$78 billion in 2015 and about \$127 billion in 2025, increasing at a much faster rate than the economy. These amounts are at 2005 prices, i.e. inflation has not been factored in. However, the proportion of tax-paying working population who will shoulder the \$127 billion expenditure in 2025 is expected to be smaller than that currently shouldering the \$38 billion.

2004 public health expenditure: about \$38 billion

2015 projected public health expenditure: about \$78 billion

2025 projected public health expenditure: about \$127 billion

If we do not reform our healthcare system promptly, our public healthcare services will no longer be able to maintain their present level of quality, and certain non-urgent healthcare services will be adversely affected. It is estimated that the waiting time for non-urgent medical services will lengthen considerably. For example:

1. New specialist out-patient cases (Medicine Specialty, e.g. diabetics, hypertension, etc.)

Now : 20 weeks

In 7 years : 76 weeks

2. Cataract surgeries

Now : 3 years

In 7 years : 6 years

“ To sustain quality healthcare services, we propose to introduce supplementary healthcare financing and have set out **6** different options for your consideration in the Healthcare Reform Consultation Document:

- **Social Health Insurance**
- **Out-of-pocket Payments**
- **Medical Savings Accounts**
- **Voluntary Health Insurance**
- **Mandatory Health Insurance**
- **Personal Healthcare Reserve ”**

For the protection of our community's health and sustainability of our quality healthcare services, we must reform our healthcare system. Please send us your views on the Healthcare Reform Consultation Document and join the discussion.

“The need for healthcare reform is imminent, and concerns you, me, and our future generations. How to do it is an important decision of our community.”

The Healthcare Reform Consultation Document and related materials can be obtained from District Offices, major public libraries, public hospitals and public clinics or can be downloaded from the following website. Please send us your views on or before 13 June 2008 through the contact below and join the discussion. Unless otherwise specified, all responses will be treated as public information and may be published in the future.

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