

Preface

Globally, we are facing a rising threat imposed by chronic non-communicable diseases or chronic diseases. Evidence shows that the risk of disease is mainly attributable to unhealthy lifestyle practices. The World Health Organization estimated that, worldwide, low fruit and vegetable intake and physical inactivity account for 2.7 million and 1.9 million deaths respectively. Increasing amounts of evidence are telling us that the earlier an individual adopts healthy lifestyle habits, the lower his or her risk of contracting non-communicable diseases during adulthood and beyond.

Hong Kong is in a process of change. As urbanization and economic growth are generally welcome, unsatisfactory diet and physical activity patterns have become more common in our population. People nowadays are more vulnerable to affluent diets than ever. Besides, many lead sedentary lives. As a result, increasing numbers of people are becoming overweight or obese. They in turn experience a higher risk of potentially lethal non-communicable diseases, such as diabetes mellitus, heart diseases and cancer. If the situation does not improve, the cost and impact of lifestyle-related diseases on our healthcare system, as well as society at large, will increase and eventually prove catastrophic.

To avert this from happening, we must work in a coordinated manner and aim to promote healthy eating and physical activity participation from all sides and at all levels: the individual, family, organization and the wider community. This responds to the call made in the Government's strategic framework document "*Promoting Health in Hong Kong: A Strategic Framework for Prevention*



and Control of Non-communicable Diseases” published in 2008.

As Chairman of the Working Group on Diet and Physical Activity, I would like to thank all who helped in drawing up this Action Plan. The objective of this is to outline the framework of actions that will take place in the coming few years to support, and help set the direction for, the delivery of effective health promotion programmes.

This document is a critical step in what must be a broader process to promote healthy diet and physical activity participation in Hong Kong. It is a product of collaboration among stakeholders from different sectors of our society. Every individual and organization has a role to play. The actions set out here represent a start, not an end. With dedication, partnership, and coordinated effort called for in this Action Plan, we are better placed to empower individuals to take responsibility for their health as well as that of others, and to create a caring community that opens up a wider range of healthy choices for all. One will agree that, eventually, wellbeing and quality of life are choices that individuals and communities have to make. Make that choice today by playing your part in the Action Plan!

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