



**Hospital Authority Convention 2008
Opening Ceremony on 5 May 2008**

**Welcome address by Mr Anthony Wu, JP,
Chairman, Hospital Authority**

Minister Wang, Mr Tang, Dr Chow, distinguished guests, delegates, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome, welcome to this year's Hospital Authority Convention. It is our great honour to have with us at this opening Dr Wang Guo-qiang, Vice Minister of Health of the People's Republic of China, Mr Henry Tang, Chief Secretary for Administration, and Dr York Chow, Secretary for Food and Health, of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government. THANK YOU.

Last year, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the Motherland and this year, we celebrate the Beijing Olympics. Last Friday, Hong Kong welcome the Olympic Torch and the joy, excitement and pride of the Hong Kong people can be felt everywhere in Hong Kong with hundreds and thousands of people dressed in red cheering the torch bearers along the relay route. Following this very exciting event which many of our colleagues participated, the Hospital Authority Convention proudly steps into its 15th anniversary today. The Convention is a major conference for healthcare professionals in the Asia Pacific region and once again, it brings together distinguished experts around the globe to share their experiences and the latest advances with our Convention delegates. Over the years, many of the speakers, sponsors and our colleagues have, time and again, contributed to this wonderful tradition of the Hospital Authority. Their participation has become a part of the Convention's history and I am delighted to see so many familiar faces in the audience. To you all, I want to say THANK YOU and I also want to tell you how very grateful we are for your continuing support for the Convention.

This year's theme is "A New Era of Patient Care". It could not have been more appropriate at a time when the much awaited Healthcare Reform Consultation Document "Your Health Your Life", has been launched in the middle of March by the Government. It is indeed most pleasing to note that the public has been engaged in intense discussions and debate over these reform proposals. The central message that "status quo is not an option" is clearly spelt out and I believe understood and accepted by the public. Whilst most attention has been given to discussing the supplementary financing options, we must lose sight on the four proposed measures of enhancing primary care, strengthening the public safety net, promoting public-private partnership, and developing the Hong Kong-wide electronic health records which are of equal importance and are fundamental to the proposed reform. I am also very delighted that the Government has already undertaken to take forward the reform by setting aside \$50 billion to share its responsibility for healthcare

financing together with the community. This is in addition to the pledge by the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to increase the spending on healthcare from 15% to 17% of recurrent government expenditure during his term of office.

We are indeed at a point that we must change in order to continue to provide quality services to the community. This Reform document is an important step in this regard and is the beginning of a new chapter in our healthcare system and I urge you all to participate fully in its deliberation.... It does not affect you and me today, it affects our future and it also affects our children and our future generations. We must not take this lightly and leave it to the others to decide. We must be engaged in this ourselves. We at the Hospital Authority are consolidating views of our board and Hospital Governing Committee members, staff, patient groups and other stakeholders in preparing our response to the Government.

Regardless of the way forward, the Hospital Authority is committed to provide quality service to the people of Hong Kong and this cannot be done without a strong and sustainable workforce. With the Government's staunch support, we were able last year to implement new starting salaries and other pay adjustments for various staff grades, including nurses and allied health staff. Moreover, we put in place a new career progression structure for our doctors and launched a number of pilot programmes of Doctor Work Reform. Currently we are finalising a career progression model for our nurses. We are committed to doing more, especially addressing unacceptable workload pressure areas and enhancing professional competencies. In building a strong and sustainable team the Hospital Authority aims to provide patient care that is Specific, Measurable, Accessible, Relevant and Timely. SMART care is what high quality service is about.

We are heartened that there has been a continuous rise in Government funding to the Hospital Authority in the past few years which actually started when our Chief Secretary was the then Financial Secretary. Thank you Henry for your generosity but of course, we wish you had given us a lot more. I would also like to give my heartfelt thanks to Dr York Chow for his visionary leadership and unwavering support for the Hospital Authority.

Finally I wish to pay tribute to all colleagues of the Hospital Authority for serving the community with enormous dedication and professionalism. In particular, my heartfelt thanks go to you all for the tremendous hard work you have all put in during the influenza surge earlier this year.

The Hospital Authority is a great economic and social asset in Hong Kong. Its indeed my honour to be your Chairman and I am proud of working with you all to contribute to the well-being of the people of Hong Kong. I am confident that, with the concerted efforts of the Government and our community partners, we will be able to meet the challenges ahead and continue to provide excellent patient care. The Hospital Authority is also looking forward to playing the role of a key medical service partner in the Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian events later this year.

I hope you all have a memorable experience at our Convention. For those from outside Hong Kong, I also wish you a pleasant stay here.

Thank you very much.