



**Hospital Authority Convention 2014**  
**Welcome Address by**  
**Professor John CY Leong, Chairman of Hospital Authority**  
**7 May 2014**

Vice-minister Sun, Chief Secretary, Dr Ko, distinguished guests and attendees – good morning.

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this year's Hospital Authority Convention. I would particularly like to extend warm greetings to our speakers from abroad who have kindly come to share their wisdom and insight.

While many of you have participated in the HA Convention for years, it is the first time for me, as Chairman of the Authority, to officiate at this important event, especially that this is the 20<sup>th</sup> HA Convention. Luckily, I am not the only debutant on the stage this morning – I have the great honour and privilege to formally announce here the launch of HA's brand new souvenir tie by taking the lead in wearing the tie today. Of course, we have similar pattern scarfs for the ladies.

The new ties and scarfs, designed by a renowned local fashion designer as a pro bono task to show his appreciation to our services and staff, feature colourful miniatures of the famous HA bear which embodies the Authority's vision, mission and values. I encourage you all to welcome these latest stars of our corporate souvenirs and join the HA style crowd!

Over the years, the Convention has been a flagship event on the HA calendar. The great enthusiasm expressed for the Convention each year is a testament to the unparalleled opportunity it provides to exchange latest trends and information, inspiring ideas and valuable experiences with distinguished medical experts, academics and practitioners from Hong Kong and overseas.

Over the next two days, a diverse range of seminars, lectures and presentations will explore and provide new perspectives on many issues that are central to our work as healthcare providers. I am particularly gratified by the proactive and passionate response of HA employees, who have set new records this year in

terms of both the number of attendees and number of abstracts submitted. Your strong engagement with the event is a clear demonstration of the growing professionalism and commitment of medical workers in Hong Kong.

With a government-mandated mission of ensuring that “no one should be denied medical care through lack of means”, HA has transformed Hong Kong’s public healthcare services from being the subject of many complaints to an operation that is widely admired by the medical community around the world. According to a 2013 international survey covering 48 countries and cities, Hong Kong’s public health service outpaces those in many advanced economies and tops the list with respect to efficiency scores for life expectancy and health costs per capita.

However, there is no room for complacency. Indeed, HA continues to face significant challenges and there is much we must do to maintain the quality of our service. For example, long waiting times are causing patient distress and leading to negative public perceptions as to HA’s ability to meet the community’s rising medical needs. While making vigorous efforts to reduce waiting times through initiatives such as establishing a centrally coordinated cross-cluster patient referral system, HA is also working to enhance public communication and transparency by publishing waiting times for certain specialist out-patient and surgery services.

Our ability to narrow the projected gap between our services and patient needs, and to implement the worthwhile changes that have been advocated, is greatly dependent on our staff members. With escalating demand from patients, many clinicians in our hospitals are increasingly overloaded. With the re-emergence of the H7N9 threat and the impact of a widespread winter influenza wave, public hospitals experienced a surge in patient numbers at Accident & Emergency departments during the early months of this year. As in previous times of crisis, our HA colleagues stepped up to the challenge without hesitation or complaint.

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to all HA staff, particularly those on the frontlines, for their ongoing dedication and vital contribution to ensuring HA delivers on its pledge to help people stay healthy and remains among the best public healthcare systems in the world. I must also offer sincere thanks to the Hong Kong Government for its continued strong support in terms of policy and funding allocation.

As the growing complexity of illness, the escalating incidence of chronic diseases, and a rising number of elderly patients combine to place increasing demands on our resources, we must redouble our efforts to maintain a high quality standard of service. To this end, we need to ensure we remain up to date

with the latest medical knowledge and clinical practices as well as continue to explore opportunities for regional and international collaboration. The HA Convention offers an excellent forum for Hong Kong's healthcare professionals to compare notes and connect with local and overseas peers. The HA Convention plays an important complementary role to the many and varied academic and professional meetings of clinicians, nurses, allied health workers, and life scientists. I am certain that the next two days will provide you with a wealth of new knowledge and inspiration.

I am sure we all, including myself, are eager to know and connect more in the Convention and I wish you a fruitful experience and our friends from overseas a very happy stay in Hong Kong.

Thank you.