

Chapter 19

Health

Hong Kong's healthcare system provides comprehensive services to the community, including a highly subsidised public safety net aiming to ensure no one is denied medical care due to lack of means. The government is deepening reform of the healthcare system to enhance its quality, efficiency and long-term sustainability, and is developing Hong Kong into an international health and medical innovation hub.

Hong Kong's healthcare system is renowned for its high efficiency, quality and professional standards. Hong Kong's health outcomes as of 2024 rank among the best in the world.

Infant mortality rate	2024	1.7 per 1,000 registered live births	
Maternal mortality ratio	2024	5.4 per 100,000 registered live births	
Life expectancy at birth	2024	82.7 (Male)	88.2 (Female)
	2046 (<i>projected</i>)	86.4 (Male)	91.8 (Female)

The government's recurrent expenditure for health has risen by about 32 per cent over the past five years, from \$87.6 billion in 2020-21 to \$115.3 billion in 2025-26, which accounted for 20 per cent of the government's recurrent expenditure in 2025-26.

Hong Kong's Domestic Health Accounts¹ show that current health expenditure increased from 6.1 to 8.3 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$131.5 billion to \$251.2 billion) from 2013-14 to 2023-24. Over the same period, current public health expenditure rose from 49 to 52 per cent (\$130.1 billion or 4.3 per cent of the GDP) of the current health expenditure.

Treatment-oriented secondary and tertiary health care, especially public hospital services, account for the majority of healthcare services and spending. In 2023-24, the current health expenditure was roughly 30 per cent on primary health care (\$73.6 billion) and 70 per cent on secondary and tertiary health care (\$177.6 billion). Owing to heavily subsidised public hospital services, 84 per cent of public health expenditure was spent on secondary and tertiary health care (\$109.9 billion) and 16 per cent on primary health care (\$20.2 billion).

Organisational Roles and Functions

The Health Bureau is responsible for formulating policies and allocating resources for upholding the quality and efficiency of the healthcare system and enhancing the health of all citizens. It carries out these policies effectively to protect and promote public health, provide lifelong holistic health care to every citizen and ensure that no one is denied adequate medical treatment due to lack of means.

The Department of Health is the government's public health adviser and executes health policies and statutory functions. It safeguards the community's health through regulatory functions, and promotional, preventive, curative and rehabilitative services.

The Hospital Authority is a statutory body managing public hospitals and providing related healthcare services. It offers medical treatment and rehabilitation services to patients through hospitals, day hospitals, specialist clinics, and other service units that are organised into seven clusters, which together serve the whole of Hong Kong.

¹ A series of accounts compiled over the years in accordance with the International Classification for Health Accounts Framework developed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development to keep track of health spending and allow for international comparison.

The Primary Healthcare Commission oversees the strategic development, standard setting, and quality assurance of primary healthcare services and the training of primary healthcare professionals, as well as the planning and provision of primary healthcare services via resource allocation and strategic purchasing supported by the Strategic Purchasing Office.

To enhance people's health, improve health care, and capitalise on the health sector's strengths, the bureau is reforming the functions and division of work among the authority, department and commission. In parallel, the government will enhance the quality, cost-effectiveness and price transparency of private healthcare services.

Healthcare Reform

The government is reforming the healthcare system to address the challenges of an ageing demographic and increasing disease burden. It supports personnel training and technology innovation to uphold the city's global standing and regional advantages in healthcare, while also developing it into an international health and medical innovation hub, an advanced medical service centre in Asia, a place where medical professionals cluster and a bridge for East-and-West healthcare exchanges.

Strengthening Primary Healthcare

In accordance with the Primary Healthcare Blueprint, released in 2022, the government has continued to shift the healthcare focus from curative, hospital-centric care to a prevention-oriented, community-based and family-centric model focusing on early detection and intervention. Reforms aim to position primary healthcare as the healthcare system's first point of contact and facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration in the primary care setting to alleviate the burden on the secondary and tertiary care levels and establish a sustainable healthcare system.

Enhancing Sustainability of Public Hospitals

The bureau and authority announced the fees and charges reform for public healthcare in March, which will be implemented from 1 January 2026. Reforming the subsidisation structure of public healthcare services aims to guide the public to make optimal use of limited healthcare resources, enhance efficiency and reduce wastage, and strengthen protection for 'poor, acute, serious and critical' patients.

Strengthening Professional Staffing and Development

To widen the professional staffing supply, the government has extended the pathway for the admission of qualified non-locally trained healthcare professionals. To train more doctors to support the local healthcare system, while nurturing Hong Kong's capacity for health and medical research and development, the establishment of a third medical school, run by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, was announced in November, aiming for intake by 2028.

Modernising Healthcare Regulation

The government announced in June that it will establish the Hong Kong Centre for Medical Products Regulation by the end of 2026, to consolidate and enhance regulatory functions for

Western medicine, Chinese medicine and medical devices. The long-term objective is to establish an internationally recognised authority that registers medical products under the primary evaluation approach, which directly approves applications based on clinical trial data.

Developing International Health and Medical Innovation Hub

To speed up patients' access to advanced diagnostic and treatment services, and foster advances in biomedical technology, the government is developing Hong Kong into an international health and medical innovation hub. It will leverage the city's strengths in healthcare research, services and regulatory systems, alongside the collaboration of Chinese and Western medicine, to accelerate the reform of the regulatory framework for medical products, including drugs and medical devices; upgrade regulatory standards and approval mechanisms; enhance clinical research and trial capabilities and support; and promote an ecosystem for medical products that fosters innovation.

Primary and Community Healthcare

Primary healthcare is the first point of contact in the healthcare process. It includes health promotion and disease prevention, family medicine and allied health services, and special services for people in specific age groups who do not need immediate hospital attention.

Family medicine and allied health services are provided mainly by the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In 2024-25, private Western medicine clinics handled about 26 million outpatient visits. The Primary Healthcare Commission, set up in 2024, is enhancing primary healthcare services by establishing an integrated district-based community health system. This includes services provided by both the private sector and NGOs through a district network approach. District Health Centres support this network by providing infrastructure, coordination, and oversight. These services are subsidised through a targeted funding model: the government purchases specific services according to established standards and monitors provider performance to ensure quality.

To support primary healthcare reform, the General Out-patient Clinic and Family Medicine Specialist Clinic services of the Hospital Authority were reorganised under the name of Family Medicine Out-patient Services in October. They comprise 75 Family Medicine Clinics and Family Medicine Integrated Centres, which are repositioned to take priority care for the underprivileged groups. In 2025, about 1.85 million patients used these services, with 6.64 million attendances recorded.

The Primary Healthcare Commission is also taking over primary healthcare services, previously provided by the Department of Health. The services of Woman Health Centres were merged into the district health network in January, providing prevention-oriented and personalised primary healthcare services on a co-payment basis for eligible women. The commission is also preparing to integrate the services of Elderly Health Centres into the district health network in phases, to better address the elderly's demand for primary healthcare services.

District Health Centres

District Health Centres and the interim District Health Centre Expresses, operated by NGOs with government funding, act as healthcare resource hubs in every district. They facilitate collaboration between public and private primary healthcare service providers from different sectors and disciplines in the community.

In all, there are 10 full District Health Centres, of which three – Central and Western, Yau Tsim Mong and Eastern – were upgraded from District Health Centre Expresses in 2025. The remaining eight are District Health Centre Expresses, though the commission aims to establish a full centre in every district.

As at end-2025, the cumulative attendance at all District Health Centres (including expresses) exceeded 3.7 million visits. Membership has grown substantially, with nearly 500,900 citizens enrolled, and all centres achieved their service volume targets in the 2024-25 financial year.

Chronic Disease Co-care Pilot Scheme

The Chronic Disease Co-care Pilot Scheme enables residents aged 45 or above with no known medical history of diabetes mellitus or hypertension to receive government-subsidised screening for these two diseases and subsequent medical follow-up. It was expanded in March to include blood lipid testing, allowing for a more comprehensive approach to the assessment and proper management of cardiovascular disease risk factors, including the ‘three highs’ (blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol).

As of end-2025, about 189,300 citizens had participated in the scheme, of whom, around 114,500 participants had completed screening. Of these, about 43 per cent (around 49,000 participants) were diagnosed with prediabetes, diabetes mellitus, hypertension or dyslipidaemia. These participants can proceed to the treatment phase, during which the government provides subsidies for multidisciplinary follow-up care.

While citizens are encouraged to take primary responsibility for managing their health by joining the scheme on a co-payment basis, the healthcare needs of underprivileged groups have not been overlooked. From March, the scheme was expanded to Family Medicine Clinics under the Hospital Authority in phases, to provide preventive screening and care services for the underprivileged groups, with the first phase covering seven districts. By end-2025, the relevant services had been expanded to selected clinics in all 18 districts.

Family Health

There are 29 maternal and child health centres that provide immunisation, parenting, health and developmental surveillance, and breastfeeding support for children from birth to five years of age and women aged 64 or below. Maternal, family planning and cervical screening services, as well as health education, are also offered to women. In 2025, around 10,500 expectant mothers and 28,000 newborn babies attended such centres.

Elderly Health

Eighteen Elderly Health Centres provide primary healthcare to members aged 65 and above, and 18 Visiting Health Teams hold health promotion activities for the elderly and provide

training to carers. In 2025, there were about 34,000 enrolments and 120,000 attendances for health assessment and medical consultation, as well as some 356,000 attendances at promotional activities organised by the Elderly Health Service.

Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme

The Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme provides subsidies to the elderly to receive private primary care in the community that best suits their needs. Each eligible elderly person is currently provided with an annual voucher of \$2,000, with a maximum accumulation limit of \$8,000.

In 2025, the government extended the Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme to cover all nine Chinese Mainland cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), offering eligible elderly persons more convenience and flexibility. Eligible elderly persons can now use the vouchers at 21 service points in the GBA.

As of end-2025, more than 1.8 million eligible elderly persons had used the vouchers.

Oral Health

The Oral Health Action Plan promotes prevention-oriented primary oral healthcare among citizens across all age groups, while essential dental care services for underprivileged groups are also provided. The Community Dental Support Programme was launched in May to provide additional government-subsidised dental services to underprivileged groups with financial difficulties.

Eight school dental clinics provide preventive dental services. In 2024-25, about 307,600, or 97 per cent, of all primary students participated in such services. To bridge these services, the Primary Dental Co-care Pilot Scheme for Adolescents was launched in March to subsidise secondary school students getting dental check-ups at private dental clinics and to establish regular oral check-up habits.

To address the issue of tooth decay among preschool children, the government gradually extended the 'Bright Smiles Baby Programme' from child care centres to all maternal and child health centres, targeting children aged zero to three.

The Department of Health provides dental services for special school students with disabilities in school dental clinics until they become 18 years old. It is also expanding the oral health and dental care support to cover adults aged 18 or above with intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorder, through the Healthy Teeth Collaboration programme.

Mental Health

The government adopts an integrated approach in promoting mental health, encompassing prevention, early identification, timely intervention and rehabilitation. Cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary support and care services are available through collaboration among government bodies and other relevant organisations.

The Hospital Authority is a major medical service provider for people with mental disorders. Its psychiatric services include inpatient facilities, day hospitals, specialist outpatient clinics and community outreach. In the 2024-25 financial year, about 324,000 people received treatment and support through these services.

The Advisory Committee on Mental Health advises the government on mental health policies and follows up on recommendations in the Mental Health Review Report. The committee assists with the implementation of the Shall We Talk mental health promotion and public education initiative, with various activities to enhance mental health awareness and encourage the public to seek help. As part of the initiative, the Mental Health Workplace Charter aims to promote a mental health-friendly workplace.

The 18111 – Mental Health Support Hotline provides one-stop, round-the-clock support for people with mental health needs, rendering them immediate mental health support and referral services.

Community Outreach Healthcare

Community outreach healthcare aims to reduce reliance on inpatient services and help patients recover in the community. In 2025, the Hospital Authority conducted 2.26 million home visits and outreach care services for, among others, the elderly and people with mental illnesses. As of end-2025, around 86 per cent of those receiving community nursing services were elders.

Secondary, Tertiary and Specialised Healthcare

As of end-2025, Hong Kong had 31,149 public hospital beds, comprising 24,814 general beds, 1,950 infirmary beds, 3,710 beds for the mentally ill, and 675 for the mentally disabled. There were 5,182 private hospital beds, comprising 4,807 inpatient beds and 375 day beds, and 811 in institutions run by the Correctional Services Department. There were 4.9 beds per 1,000 population².

Public Hospital Services

The expenditure for the provision of inpatient and day inpatient services in 2024-25 by public hospitals was \$61.7 billion. In 2025, a total of 2.03 million inpatients and day inpatients were discharged.

The Hospital Authority's specialist outpatient clinics arrange appointments for new patients based on their clinical conditions. Patients who require urgent medical attention will receive priority. Patients with stable conditions may be referred to family medicine clinics or private general practitioners. In 2025, the specialist outpatient clinics recorded 8.78 million attendances.

It was announced that fees and charges for public healthcare will be reformed, effective from 1 January 2026. The reform will include revising the subsidy structure from a systemic

² Consisting of all beds in the Hospital Authority's hospitals, private hospitals, and correctional institutions.

perspective. This involves setting government subsidy levels and public co-payment rates for various public healthcare services, in order to rationalise demand across in-patient, accident and emergency, and different tiers of out-patient services.

It will also introduce a co-payment model for pathology and non-urgent diagnostic radiology services; adjust the charges for and quantities of standard drugs; and encourage the public to behave responsibly when seeking medical treatment. In addition, the reform will strengthen protection for 'poor, acute, serious and critical' patients by expanding the fee waiver mechanism; significantly increasing the number of estimated eligible beneficiaries from 0.9 million to 2 million; introducing an annual cap on fees and charges at \$10,000; and increasing subsidies on drugs and medical devices for the critically ill, with a view to preventing patients with serious conditions from falling into poverty.

Accident and Emergency Services

Accident and emergency services are available at 18 public hospitals, delivering high-quality care for critically ill or injured people and victims of disasters. Patients are classified under five categories according to their clinical condition: critical, emergency, urgent, semi-urgent and non-urgent. This triage system ensures patients with more urgent needs receive prompt treatment. In 2025, all critical patients received immediate treatment, over 95 per cent of emergency patients were treated within 15 minutes, and most urgent patients were treated within 30 minutes.

Accident and emergency services entailed some \$4.4 billion in expenditure in 2024-25 and handled 1.9 million visits by 1.17 million people in 2025, an average of about 5,200 attendances per day. Semi-urgent and non-urgent cases accounted for more than 54 per cent of attendances.

Private Hospital Services

There are 14 private hospitals that complement the public sector by providing a range of specialist and hospital services. In 2024, the private hospitals served 347,641 inpatients, representing 15 per cent of total inpatients. Spending on private inpatient services amounted to \$23 billion in 2023-24, accounting for 28 per cent of overall expenditure on public and private inpatient services.

Strategic Purchasing

The government has implemented various clinical public-private partnership programmes through the Hospital Authority to leverage private sector resources to help alleviate pressure on the public system, for instance in cataract surgeries and haemodialysis. In 2024-25, the programmes incurred a total expenditure of \$622 million with more than 70,000 patients served.

The General Outpatient Clinic Public-private Partnership Programme subsidises clinically stable patients with hypertension and/or diabetes mellitus under the care of its Family Medicine Clinics to opt for primary care from the private sector. As of end-2025, more than 590 service providers and 50,000 patients had participated in the programme. The programme is being merged into the Chronic Disease Co-care Scheme.

Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme

The Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme aims to regulate the quality of individual indemnity hospital insurance products and improve market transparency, providing consumers with greater confidence in health insurance and private healthcare services, thereby alleviating pressure on the public healthcare system. As of end-2025, the number of scheme policies reached about 1.52 million.

Genomic Medicine

The Hong Kong Genome Institute implements the Hong Kong Genome Project to perform genome sequencing on cases of undiagnosed disorders and hereditary cancers and cases related to genomics and precision health. The sequencing results may help the diagnosis or clinical management of participants, and the resulting genomic database will facilitate scientific research. The project attained its initial target of recruiting 50,000 participants ahead of schedule in 2025.

Other Specialised Services

Specialised services are provided in facilities under the Department of Health, including 18 methadone clinics, 17 chest clinics, eight social hygiene clinics, four dermatological clinics, two integrated treatment centres, seven child assessment centres, two travel health centres and three operating public mortuaries. These facilities recorded about 1.6 million attendances in 2025. Those services which overlap with, or are closely related to, specialist services in public hospitals are gradually being transferred to or combined under the Hospital Authority.

End-of-life Care

The government has been preparing for the commencement of the Advance Decision on Life-sustaining Treatment Ordinance, which provides legislative frameworks for advance medical directives and do-not-attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation orders. The ordinance will commence on 31 July 2026.

Chinese Medicine

Chinese Medicine Services

At the district level, 18 Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres promote the development of Chinese medicine through services, training and research, under a tripartite collaboration model involving the Hospital Authority, NGOs and local universities. The centres provide an annual quota of 800,000 government-subsidised Chinese medicine outpatient services, covering general consultation, acupuncture and bone setting/*tui-na* services, while also providing non-governmental-subsidised outpatient services. There were about 1.6 million attendances in 2025.

The Hospital Authority has implemented the Integrated Chinese-Western Medicine programme at public hospitals which provides treatment to patients of designated disease areas through the 18 Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres. In 2025, the programme was expanded to offer services at 70 designated sites across 27 public hospitals, while extending the cancer care pilot programme to all hospital clusters, and planning a new

pilot programme on palliative care for organ failure and degenerative diseases for commencement in early 2026.

Private Chinese medicine clinics recorded about 17 million attendances during the year.

The Chinese Medicine Hospital of Hong Kong began operation in phases from 11 December, offering outpatient and day-patient services and fully launching six specialised Chinese medicine services and 12 special disease programmes in its first year. To demonstrate the government's commitment to public health, 65 per cent of the hospital's service volume is through government-subsidised services.

Chinese Medicine Development

The government released the Chinese Medicine Development Blueprint in December. It is the first policy document dedicated to the development of Chinese medicine. It outlines the vision of inheriting the wisdom of Chinese medicine through leveraging the motherland's development experience and resources, and utilising Chinese medicine to provide citizens with higher quality and more comprehensive healthcare services, while establishing Hong Kong as a bridgehead for the global expansion of Chinese medicine.

Hong Kong's two flagship institutions for Chinese medicine development – the Chinese Medicine Hospital of Hong Kong and the permanent premises of the Government Chinese Medicines Testing Institute – commenced phased operations from 11 December and will drive the development of Chinese medicine services, professional training, scientific research and innovation, standard-setting and international cooperation, all while demonstrating the value and strengths of Chinese medicine to the world.

The seventh Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Conference on the Inheritance, Innovation, and Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine was held on 2 December, hosted in Hong Kong for the first time. Convened by Chinese medicine authorities from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, the conference promoted the implementation of a national development strategy for the GBA. More than 800 Chinese medicine experts, scholars, health officials and industry representatives attended.

Public and Population Health

The Department of Health safeguards public health through disease prevention, health promotion, health services and regulatory oversight.

As the government's health adviser, the department reinforces its capacity in public health surveillance, emergency preparedness, and risk communication to effectively respond to emerging health threats.

In exercising its regulatory oversight functions, the department implements and enforces health-related legislation, standards, and licensing regimes to safeguard public health. It also fosters community partnerships and international collaboration, to ensure the healthcare system remains responsive to the evolving needs of the community.

Health Promotion and Preventive Care

The Department of Health promotes healthy lifestyles and preventive care through schools, workplaces, communities, and various service points – including maternal and child health centres, Student Health Service Centres and Elderly Health Centres. Areas of focus include breastfeeding, vaccination, balanced diet, physical activity, smoke- and alcohol-free living, and mental well-being.

To systematically and comprehensively address the demographic structure and health needs of the local population, the Department of Health is devising a health promotion strategy covering different age groups, from birth to elderly.

Vaccination

The Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme provides free vaccination services for eligible children to prevent 12 communicable diseases. Pertussis vaccinations are provided for women between 26 and 34 weeks of pregnancy, as part of routine antenatal care.

The government provides free or subsidised seasonal influenza vaccines to eligible groups, including children and those aged 50 or above, through various programmes. The government also provides pneumococcal, Covid-19, Mpox and one-off catch-up human papilloma virus vaccinations to respective eligible groups.

Student Health

There are 13 student health service centres that provide health screening and individual counselling to primary and secondary students. In the 2024-25 academic year, about 256,000 primary students and 172,000 secondary students attended the services.

The Whole School Health Programme assists schools in reviewing and formulating health promotion measures, with the aim of becoming a health-promoting school as advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO). By the end of the year, 886 schools (more than 75 per cent) had joined the programme.

In October, in response to concerns about the health impact, including non-communicable diseases, obesity and mental health, of screen and social media use by children and adolescents, the Department of Health established the Advisory Group on Health Effects of Screen and Social Media Use for Children and Adolescents. It will review the latest medical and scientific evidence, as well as developments and experiences in other countries and regions.

Cancer Prevention

The government provides screening for cervical cancer, colorectal cancer and breast cancer. For breast cancer, risk assessment and screening for women at moderate and average risk has been regularised, while the second phase of the Breast Cancer Screening Pilot Programme was launched in June to provide subsidised screening services for high-risk women aged 35 to 74, aiming to enhance the recovery rate of breast cancer patients through early detection and treatment.

Infectious Diseases Prevention and Control

The Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance specifies 53 statutory notifiable infectious diseases in Hong Kong. During the year, about 8,700 cases were reported. The Centre for Health Protection reviews and updates its strategies for coping with major outbreaks of infectious diseases, ensuring both the government and community are prepared.

The government is implementing various aspects under the Hong Kong Strategy and Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (2023-2027), which sets out response strategies to the threat of antimicrobial resistance.

In December, the government promulgated the Hong Kong Viral Hepatitis Action Plan 2025-2030, which sets out strategies to further strengthen the prevention and control of viral hepatitis, with a view to progressing towards the WHO's target of eliminating the threat posed by viral hepatitis by 2030.

To prevent and control the spread of infectious and other serious diseases into or out of Hong Kong, the Port Health Division enforces health quarantine measures according to the International Health Regulations and the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance.

HIV Testing, Counselling and Education

The Department of Health's Red Ribbon Centre works with community partners to enhance awareness and prevention of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and to promote the care and acceptance of people with HIV. The HIV Testing Month in December exemplifies the collaborative efforts between Red Ribbon Centre and community partners to normalise HIV testing by increasing public awareness and to facilitate them to receive testing through a variety of channels. In 2025, the centre organised more than 70 activities for more than 87,000 participants.

Non-communicable Diseases Prevention and Control

Non-communicable diseases, including cancer, cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes mellitus together accounted for about 53 per cent of all registered deaths in 2024. The government is implementing its Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases, which sets out nine targets and a portfolio of initiatives to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases.

The Hong Kong Cancer Strategy aims to reduce the cancer burden in the local population and improve the quality of life and survivorship of cancer patients. The government promotes a healthy lifestyle as the primary preventive strategy, which includes no smoking, avoiding alcohol consumption, eating a balanced diet and engaging in regular physical activity.

Tobacco Control

Hong Kong's tobacco control policy aims to discourage smoking, contain the proliferation of tobacco use and minimise the impact from passive smoking through legislation, publicity, education, enforcement, smoking cessation and taxation. The smoking prevalence of Hong Kong dropped from 9.1 per cent in 2023 to 8.5 per cent in 2025.

The Tobacco Control Legislation (Amendment) Ordinance was passed in September, marking a new phase of tobacco control measures that builds on the ongoing review of tobacco duty and strengthening of smoking cessation services. Measures focusing on combating illicit cigarettes and preventing a new generation from smoking took immediate effect in September, while further measures to extend statutory no-smoking areas and strengthen control of alternative smoking products are planned to take effect in early 2026.

The Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health, an independent statutory body, advises the government on smoking, passive smoking and health matters, and publicises the hazards of smoking. The council also conducts publicity, education and community involvement campaigns, and receives enquiries and suggestions from the public on smoking and health matters.

Healthcare System Regulation

Medical Products Regulation

Drug and Advanced Therapy Products

Pharmaceutical products, including advanced therapy products, are regulated under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance. As of end-2025, a total of 16 new drugs including one advanced therapy product, had been registered under the '1+' mechanism for registration of pharmaceutical products.

Also by the end of the year, there were 14,268 registered pharmaceutical products, including five advanced therapy products, and two licensed manufacturers authorised to manufacture advanced therapy products for clinical trial purposes.

Medical Devices

The voluntary Medical Device Administrative Control System approves a list of medical devices to ensure their compliance with safety, quality and performance standards, establishes a trader listing system, and implements a post-market monitoring system for products.

In 2025, the system received certification which affirms that its processes for quality control, risk management and continuous improvement meet internationally recognised standards of excellence.

Hong Kong Centre for Medical Products Regulation

The Department of Health announced in June its plan to establish the Centre for Medical Products Regulation, which will enhance the prevailing evaluation, approval and registration mechanism for drugs, and implement 'primary evaluation' for new drug registration in phases, starting from 2026. The department also aims to establish the centre as an internationally recognised regulatory authority for medical products, which will speed up patient access to breakthrough treatments and boost medical research and development in Hong Kong.

Healthcare Professional Regulation

As at end-2025, the number of registered healthcare professionals was as follows:

Doctors	16,905
Dentists	2,926
Chinese medicine practitioners (listed and registered)	10,815
Nurses (registered and enrolled)	74,767
Midwives	4,428
Pharmacists	3,461
Chiropractors	351
Physiotherapists	5,450
Occupational therapists	3,677
Medical laboratory technologists	4,924
Optometrists	2,255
Radiographers	3,067
Dental hygienists	682

The Accredited Registers Scheme for Healthcare Professions enhances the society-based registration arrangements for healthcare professions not subject to statutory registration. As at end-2025, the number of voluntary registrants under each accredited healthcare profession was as follows:

Hong Kong Institute of Speech Therapists	310
Hong Kong Institute of Audiologists	69
Hong Kong Academy of Accredited Dietitians	170
Hong Kong Association of Educational Psychologists	197
Hong Kong Institute of Clinical Psychologists	490

Doctors

To increase the number of doctors in Hong Kong, the government has increased the number of training places for medical students funded by the University Grants Committee to 650 in the 2025-26 academic year.

Degree courses in medicine and surgery are offered at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong, which admitted 744 medical students to their bachelor's degree programmes in 2025.

Non-locally trained doctors can register and practise in the city after passing the Medical Council of Hong Kong's licensing examination and completing a period of assessment of normally 12 months in an approved hospital. In 2025, 55 non-locally trained doctors passed the licensing examination. Non-locally trained doctors may also work in specified institutions on a limited registration basis for three years, which can then be renewed. As of end-2025, there were 367 non-locally trained doctors on limited registration.

The Medical Registration Ordinance also offers an alternative pathway for non-locally trained doctors to obtain full registration. The Special Registration Committee, established under the Medical Council, determines a list of recognised medical qualifications of a quality comparable to those provided by Hong Kong's medical schools. As of end-2025, the committee recognised 150 such medical qualifications and there were 154 non-locally trained doctors on special registration.

The Hong Kong Academy of Medicine is an independent statutory body that approves, assesses and accredits specialist training within the medical and dental professions. The Hospital Authority trains specialist doctors, offering appointments to all qualified medical graduates from the local universities each year for on-the-job specialist training. In 2025-26, about 500 doctors were recruited for specialist training. In addition to local medical graduates, non-locally trained doctors are also recruited by the Hospital Authority and provided with specialist training opportunities.

Dentists

The University of Hong Kong offers degree courses in dentistry, admitting 93 students to its bachelor's degree programme in 2025, while 34 non-locally trained dental graduates passed licensing examinations conducted by the Dental Council of Hong Kong.

New pathways were introduced to admit qualified non-locally trained dentists to practise in specified institutions under limited registration and special registration in 2024. As of end-2025, there were 17 non-locally trained dentists on limited registration.

To further enhance the professional standard of dentists, the Dentists Registration Ordinance requires local dental graduates to undergo internship, and non-locally trained dentists who passed the licensing examination to undergo a period of assessment, before obtaining full registration. In 2025, the first batch of non-locally trained dentists started working for the Department of Health, while 75 local dental graduates joined the first 12-month Dental Internship Programme.

Dental Care Professionals

To strengthen primary dental services, the government has gradually increased the number of training places for dental hygienists and dental therapists to 220 in 2025-26.

Chinese Medicine Practitioners

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University and the University of Hong Kong offer full-time undergraduate degree courses in Chinese medicine. In 2025, 75 full-time local bachelor's degree graduates who passed the licensing examination were registered as Chinese medicine practitioners.

The Hospital Authority implements the Chinese Medicine Practitioner Trainee Programme at the 18 Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres, which provides 216 training places for Chinese medicine practitioner trainees, including 72 places for the first year of training.

Allied Health Professionals

Degree programmes for allied health professionals are available at five institutions³, which, in 2025, admitted a total of 1,127 students to programmes in physiotherapy, radiography/radiation therapy, occupational therapy, medical laboratory science and optometry.

The Hospital Authority's Institute of Advanced Allied Health Studies devises structured long-term training plans for allied health staff members and runs courses on specialist and multidisciplinary training, and clinical and personal development. These include three years of in-service training for new recruits of allied health grades. In 2025, the institute offered 112 training courses and 72 overseas scholarships.

The Supplementary Medical Professions (Amendment) Bill was passed in July to provide a new pathway for the admission of qualified non-locally trained allied health professionals to practise in designated institutions under limited registration. As of end-2025, four non-locally trained allied health professionals had been approved for limited registration.

Nurses

Pre-registration nursing training is available at 10 institutions and hospitals⁴ and they recruited 3,402 students into their nursing degree programmes in 2025. In addition, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the University of Hong Kong enrolled another 124 students in their master's degree of nursing programmes.

Six institutions and hospitals⁵ provide pre-enrolment nursing training and they recruited 515 pupil nurses into their two-year higher diploma in enrolled nursing (general) programmes in 2025. Hong Kong Metropolitan University enrolled 272 and 56 pupils in its two-year higher diploma in general health and higher diploma in mental health nursing programmes respectively.

Under the Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors, the government-subsidised, self-financing undergraduate programmes in nursing offered 1,710 places in 2025-26.

The Hospital Authority's three-and-a-half-year Professional Diploma in Nursing programme provides pre-registration nursing training with 321 students in the 2025-26 intake. In addition, another 110 pupil nurses were admitted to the two-year Enrolled Nurse (General) Training programme in 2025-26.

³ City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Metropolitan University, Saint Francis University, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Tung Wah College

⁴ Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong Metropolitan University, Hong Kong Sanatorium and Hospital, Saint Francis University, St Teresa's Hospital, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the University of Hong Kong, Tung Wah College and University of Hong Kong School of Professional and Continuing Education

⁵ Hong Kong Adventist College, Hong Kong Sanatorium and Hospital, Saint Francis University, St Teresa's Hospital, Tung Wah College and Union Hospital

The Institute of Advanced Nursing Studies strengthens specialty training for nurses and encourages them to improve professional standards through continuous learning.

The Nurses Registration (Amendment) Bill, passed in 2024, provides new pathways for the admission of qualified non-locally trained registered or enrolled nurses to practise in designated or specified institutions under limited or special registration. As of end-2025, there were 30 nurses under special registration, 227 nurses under limited registration, and 137 nurses under limited enrolment.

Healthcare Professional Training

The government will provide more subsidies for students to enrol in healthcare postgraduate programmes, increasing the number of designated places on a subsidy scheme for undergraduate healthcare programmes, and waiving clinical practicum training fees paid by tertiary institutions, to enhance the training of healthcare professionals.

In November, the Chief Executive in Council approved in principle for a third medical school to be established by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. The aim is to admit the first cohort of 50 students in the 2028-29 academic year, and commission the new Medical Education and Research Complex to be constructed in the university's campus in Clear Water Bay. The government has also reserved land at Ngau Tam Mei in the Northern Metropolis for the permanent campus of the new medical school and for the development of an integrated teaching and research hospital.

Private Healthcare Facilities Regulation

The Private Healthcare Facilities Ordinance is being implemented in phases, based on facility type and risk level. The phase for clinics and small practice clinics came into effect in October, requiring them to apply for a licence or letter of exemption to operate.

The government is also working to enhance the price transparency of private hospital services to give citizens more information before making medical decisions and boost their confidence in using private healthcare services.

The bureau proposed in 2025 that all private healthcare facilities be required to publish price information, and that all private hospitals be required to provide budget estimates, and report and publish historical statistics on fees and charges. The government plans to introduce the relevant regulations to the Legislative Council in 2026. The bureau also proposed long-term enhancement measures, namely consolidating and sharing private healthcare data, promoting standardisation of the scope of healthcare services and chargeable items, and publishing clinical guidelines, and service quality and efficiency standards.

Human Reproductive Technology

The Human Reproductive Technology Ordinance regulates the application of human reproductive technologies to ensure the procedures are conducted in a safe and informed manner, and to safeguard the welfare of children born through these technologies. The Human

Reproductive Technology (Licensing) (Amendment) Regulation 2025 came into effect on 1 December, removing the statutory storage periods of gametes and embryos for own use to enable the public to decide the storage duration of their gametes or embryos.

Organ Donation and Transplant

The bureau, Department of Health and Hospital Authority work with community partners to promote organ donation. As of end-2025, the Centralised Organ Donation Register had recorded more than 414,000 registrations. The Human Organ Transplant Ordinance regulates the transplant of human organs and import of human organs for transplant purposes, and prohibits commercial dealings in human organs intended for transplant. In 2025, the board received 17 applications for organ transplants between living non-related persons, and Hong Kong imported 51 human organs for transplant purposes.

Public Health Laboratory Services

The Centre for Health Protection conducts laboratory tests on clinical and surveillance specimens and provides clinical diagnostic and public health laboratory services to the public and private sectors for patient care and other public health purposes. Its laboratories participate in and contribute to various WHO laboratory networks, including influenza, poliomyelitis, measles, rubella, tuberculosis and coronaviruses.

Private Medical Laboratories/Diagnostic Centres

Medical laboratories/diagnostic centres provide clinical diagnostic laboratory testing services to manage, prevent and treat diseases and for health assessment. The standard of the medical laboratory service is ensured through the professional regulation of medical laboratory technologists. As at the end of 2025, there were 118 companies performing the profession of medical private laboratory science in Hong Kong.

Health Infrastructure Development

Clinical Trials Facilitation

Located in the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone, the Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Institute has established a 'one institute, one centre' framework and launched a GBA Clinical Trial Collaboration Platform with its counterparts in the Shenzhen Park. It provides a one-stop clinical trial support platform that brings together researchers and integrates databases to promote cross-boundary clinical research and development, focusing on accelerating clinical trials for rare disease drugs, high-end cancer drugs and advanced therapy products.

The institute established the Real World Study and Application Centre in December to support and synchronise the use of real world data in registration applications for innovative drugs and medical devices in Hong Kong, the Chinese Mainland and overseas, thereby accelerating product research and development, approval and market launch.

Electronic Health System

The Electronic Health System, or eHealth, links healthcare providers in the public and private sectors with healthcare recipients and their electronic health records for continuity, efficiency

and quality of care. The government is taking forward the eHealth+ development plan to transform the system into a comprehensive healthcare information infrastructure that integrates multiple functions of data sharing, service delivery and care journey management. It aims to facilitate care coordination, cross-sector collaboration, and health management and surveillance, thereby better serving citizens in obtaining optimal healthcare services.

To support the development of eHealth+, the Electronic Health Record Sharing System (Amendment) Ordinance came into operation on 1 December. The government encourages private healthcare providers to deposit electronic health records onto eHealth, and has developed the Strategic Health Service Operation Platform to integrate and support all subsidised healthcare programmes in phases. The functionalities of the eHealth mobile application as a patient-centric integrated health tool have also been enhanced, providing access to electronic health records, including laboratory and radiology reports, a doctor-search function and an eMedical Certificate function.

As of end-2025, more than 6.4 million people had registered with eHealth, accounting for more than 86 per cent of the population. More than 4,400 healthcare providers, including the Hospital Authority, Department of Health and all local private hospitals, as well as more than 62,800 healthcare professionals were registered with eHealth. The eHealth app recorded more than 4 million downloads and was accessed on average more than 1.1 million times per month.

The Cross-boundary Health Record and Personal Folder functions in the eHealth app gradually rolled out since 2024 at 20 medical institutions, including the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital and medical institutions under the Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme, were made available to all eHealth users in December. These functions enable the secure use of electronic health records by citizens across the boundary.

Public Hospital Development Projects

The government and Hospital Authority have been implementing the First Hospital Development Plan since 2016, for which \$200 billion has been earmarked for 16 projects to redevelop or expand 11 existing public hospitals and construct a new acute public hospital, three new family medicine integrated centres and one new supporting services centre. In 2025, the construction of the phase 2 redevelopment of Kwai Chung Hospital was completed and the main works for the redevelopment of Shek Kip Mei Health Centre had commenced.

The government and authority are reviewing the Second Hospital Development Plan, which will take into consideration Hong Kong's changing demographics and other government development strategies such as 'Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030' and the 'Northern Metropolis Development Strategy'.

Research and Data Analytics

The Health and Medical Research Fund, under the Research and Data Analytics Office, aims to build research capacity and encourage, facilitate and support research to inform health policies, improve population health, strengthen the healthcare system, enhance healthcare practices, advance the standard and quality of care, and promote clinical excellence, through the generation and application of evidence-based scientific knowledge derived from local research

in health and medicine. It also provides funding to evidence-based health promotion projects that help people adopt healthier lifestyles. The office also coordinates the data governance and analytics functions across the public sector, compiles the Domestic Health Accounts, and maintains the Population-based Health Data Model to support healthcare policy planning and formulation.

Websites

Accredited Registers Scheme for Healthcare Professions: www.ars.gov.hk
 Cancer Online Resource Hub: www.cancer.gov.hk
 Centralised Organ Donation Register: www.codr.gov.hk/codr
 Centre for Health Protection: www.chp.gov.hk
 Cervical Screening Programme: www.cervicalscreening.gov.hk
 Change for Health: www.change4health.gov.hk
 Chinese Medicine Development Fund: www.cmdevfund.hk
 Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme: www.colonscreen.gov.hk
 Department of Health: www.dh.gov.hk
 Digital Herbarium for Chinese Medicines: www.cmherbarium.gov.hk
 District Health Centre: www.dhc.gov.hk
 eHealth: www.ehealth.gov.hk
 Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Institute: www.gbaicti.hk/
 Greater Bay Area Clinical Trial Collaboration Platform: www.gba-clinicaltrials.com/en
 Health Bureau: www.healthbureau.gov.hk
 Health and Medical Research Fund Secretariat: rfs.healthbureau.gov.hk
 HIV Testing Service website: www.hivtest.gov.hk
 Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health: www.smokefree.hk
 Hong Kong Genome Institute: www.hkgp.org
 Hong Kong's Domestic Health Accounts: www.healthbureau.gov.hk/statistics/en/dha.htm
 Hospital Authority: www.ha.org.hk
 Oral Health Promotion Division: www.toothclub.gov.hk
 Organ Donation: www.organdonation.gov.hk
 Primary Healthcare Blueprint: www.primaryhealthcare.gov.hk/bp
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 Red Ribbon Centre: www.rrc.gov.hk
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 Shall We Talk initiative: www.shallwetalk.hk
 Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office: www.taco.gov.hk
 Travel Health Service: www.travelhealth.gov.hk
 Viral Hepatitis Control Office: www.hepatitis.gov.hk
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 Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme Office: www.vhis.gov.hk