

Preface


Dr. Ronald Man-kin LAM, JP
Director of Health



It is my privilege to introduce the Hong Kong Viral Hepatitis Action Plan 2025-2030. This comprehensive strategy embodies the steadfast commitment of the Government and the wider health sector to confronting the significant public health challenges posed by viral hepatitis, particularly hepatitis B and C, within our community.

Decades of dedicated effort have yielded substantial progress in mitigating mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) of the hepatitis B virus (HBV), which is the primary driver of hepatitis B prevalence in Hong Kong. The universal adoption of antenatal screening, neonatal hepatitis B vaccination, and administration of hepatitis B immunoglobulin to at-risk newborns since the 1980s has achieved a remarkable reduction in prevalence—from exceeding 10% in earlier eras to 5.6% during 2020-22 in the general population. Notably, the prevalence is even lower than 1% among the younger generation born after the implementation of universal neonatal hepatitis B vaccination programme in 1988. Building decisively upon this foundation, initiatives launched under our previous action plan—namely maternal antiviral prophylaxis and post-vaccination serologic testing—have brought us measurably closer to the aspirational goal of a hepatitis B-free generation.

Notwithstanding these advances, hepatitis B remains a prevalent condition, affecting an estimated 410 000 individuals in Hong Kong. Left unmanaged, chronic infection can progress to cirrhosis and hepatocellular carcinoma, imposing a considerable burden on both individuals and our healthcare infrastructure. It is therefore imperative that we enhance screening efforts to identify undiagnosed cases within the community and ensure seamless linkage to appropriate medical care for all diagnosed individuals.



This Action Plan is meticulously aligned with the World Health Organization's (WHO) global strategy for the elimination of viral hepatitis. It articulates a focused approach across four strategic axes: heightening awareness, tracking health sector response, preventing new infections, and expanding access to screening, care, and treatment. A cornerstone initiative involves the strategic introduction of a risk-based hepatitis B testing programme in primary care and community settings, leveraging the proven momentum and invaluable experience gained from recent enhancements to focused risk-based testing in selected Department of Health clinical services.

The successful realisation of this Plan hinges fundamentally on collaboration. We call upon the concerted efforts of the Government, the Hospital Authority, academic institutions, and our indispensable community stakeholders to advance collectively towards the shared global ambition of eliminating viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

I extend my profound gratitude to the Steering Committee on Prevention and Control of Viral Hepatitis and all partners whose expertise and dedication were instrumental in formulating this critical Action Plan. Your unwavering commitment is essential to securing a future for Hong Kong unburdened by the public health threat of viral hepatitis.

Dr. Libby Ha-yun LEE
Chief Executive, Hospital Authority



The launch of the Hong Kong Viral Hepatitis Action Plan 2025-2030 marks a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to combat viral hepatitis. Reflecting on the progress made since the implementation of the first Action Plan (2020-2024), our strategies—raising awareness, enhancing surveillance, promoting prevention, and expanding access to treatment—have laid a strong foundation for addressing the public health challenges posed by viral hepatitis in Hong Kong. Through the concerted efforts of the Hospital Authority (HA), the Department of Health, and our partners across the public and private sectors, we have made remarkable strides towards realising the vision of a hepatitis-free future.

Preventing mother-to-child transmission remains a key priority in our endeavour to achieve a hepatitis B-free generation. Since August 2020, the HA has provided comprehensive assessments and antiviral prophylaxis to eligible pregnant women with hepatitis B infection, achieving consistently high acceptance rates. This initiative builds on existing preventive measures and further reduces the risk of hepatitis B transmission to newborns. In September 2023, the publication of comprehensive information resources provided primary care physicians with practical guidance on managing stable adult patients with chronic hepatitis B. This step strengthens the role of primary care physicians in the continuum of care and empowers them to deliver patient-centred care to individuals with chronic hepatitis B. It also enhances Hong Kong's capacity to scale up the management of viral hepatitis. Moreover, the HA has launched targeted programmes to identify patients with chronic hepatitis C, ensuring they receive timely and effective treatment. This initiative brings us closer to eliminating hepatitis C in Hong Kong.

Building on these successes, the second Action Plan introduces refined strategies and priority interventions to accelerate progress towards eliminating viral hepatitis as a public health threat. Together with our partners and stakeholders, we are confident that this next phase will pave the way for a healthier Hong Kong that is free from chronic viral hepatitis.