



# PRESS RELEASE 新聞稿

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**“Better Health for a Better Hong Kong” Advocates Healthy Living  
Working Population Recognizes Unhealthy Lifestyle lead to  
Serious Chronic Diseases but Refuses to change**

The “Better Health for a Better Hong Kong” (BHBHK) Campaign is a territory-wide health promotion campaign jointly organized by the Health InfoWorld of Hospital Authority (HA) and the Li Ka Shing Foundation with the Foundation’s generous support of HK\$10 million. Since the launching of the Campaign in 2000, simple health tests and professional health advice have been provided for more than ten thousands of workers from different walks of life. The Campaign aims to find out more about public health problems, suggest practical tips on healthy living and encourage people to act on the suggestions. Based on the research findings, evidence-based suggestions will be provided as guidelines on the medical and healthcare policy in future. It is hoped that eventually, we can bring the community together in the interests of better health and to build a better and healthier Hong Kong.

To signify the new stages of the BHBHK Campaign, a major event is organized today (2 October) to increase public awareness and understanding of healthy lifestyle. 200 health pioneers were lead by the Chairman of BHBHK Research Committee, Prof. Cecilia Chan, as well as other Committee members to commit themselves for a healthy lifestyle and for their family members, and to help spread the messages to the community at large.

The BHBHK aims to provide simple health test and professional health advice for 40,000 workers from different walks of life including drivers, construction and transportation workers, security guards, cleaning workers, catering workers and salespersons. The health messages have been delivered to 450,000 members of the two major labor unions - the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Union and Hong Kong Federation of Trade Union. It is believed that about a million people will be directly and indirectly benefited from the health information.



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Based on the health test data of the working population, the BHBHK Research Committee explored the influences of lifestyle on both physical and psychological status. It was found that the working population was adopting an unhealthy lifestyle which might lead to health risk factors (e.g. obesity, high cholesterol level). Undoubtedly, the chances of getting serious diseases would therefore be increased.

Having found the general health problems of the working population, the BHBHK Research Committee developed an intervention programme with a scientific and evidence-based approach. The programme targeted high risk people was to suggest practical health tips on improving their unhealthy lifestyle as well as to correct their perception on health. With the aim to promote the key health messages of “Mental Wellness”, “Regular Exercise” and “Balanced Diet”, 18 sessions of programme materials were developed voluntarily by more than 10 experts from different academic and professionals. The response from public was overwhelming.

In the coming year, the BHBHK aims to provide practical health tips on the modification of unhealthy behaviors to the public through various media. We will also work with various community partners including labor unions, corporations, housing estates, as well as government and non-government organizations to mobilize employers to promote the health of their employees and to create a healthy atmosphere in the community. It is expected that more than 3 million working population would benefit from the program.

The BHBHK, advocated by the Health InfoWorld and the Li Ka Shing Foundation, forms an outreaching health promotion network by a group of medical professionals through networking with community partners. By uniting the community resources and efforts, this meaningful health promotion campaign aims to raise the health awareness of the general public, thereby preventing the onset of common diseases.

By sponsoring HK\$10 million to the project, Mr. Li Ka Shing shares the same vision of the campaign to concern about the public health as well as to support the medical development in Hong Kong at large. Projects sponsored by Li Ka Shing Foundation vary from health promotion campaign advocating the prevention of chronic diseases to medical and scientific researches conducted by two leading medical schools of universities in Hong Kong. It demonstrates the commitment and concern of Mr. Li to the medical and healthcare development in Hong Kong.

A survey conducted by the BHBHK of which the results were announced at the day of the event reveals that although a majority of the working population perceives that it is within their own abilities and responsibilities to modify their unhealthy lifestyles, they actually have not put it into

practice. This situation is a concern to all.

### **Death Rates of Major Chronic Diseases around the Globe and in Hong Kong**

According to the World Health Organization, in 2002, major chronic diseases – Cancer, Cardiovascular Diseases, Chronic Respiratory Diseases and Diabetes Mellitus - contributed to about 50% ( 50.8% ) of a total of 57 million deaths worldwide<sup>1</sup>. The figure from the Hospital Authority in 2002 shows that the four mentioned diseases accounted for about 65 % ( 64.3% ) of a total of 34,316 deaths. If the situation does not improve, it will eventually become a huge economic and social impact for the society.

Death Rate of Cancer, Cardiovascular Diseases, Chronic Respiratory Diseases and Diabetes Mellitus in Hong Kong in 2002

	Death Rate	Actual Figure
Cancer	34%	11,658
Cardiovascular Diseases	22.3%	7,660
Chronic Respiratory Diseases	6.3%	2,179
Diabetes Mellitus	1.7%	574
Total	64.3%	22,071

### **Unhealthy Lifestyle is the Major Factor for Chronic Diseases**

The BHBHK survey showed that unhealthy lifestyles were closely associated with the above four chronic diseases. Also, it is already proven by international medical research that these diseases share three important risk factors: the lack of physical activity, unhealthy diet and smoking<sup>2</sup>.

Among these three risk factors, smoking is recognized by most of the public harmful for health. In the meantime, relevant organizations and departments are along in promoting the related health initiatives. On the other hand, mental wellness is also an essential part of health as a whole. However, the public is not aware that poor mental health will bring about serious health consequences. In view of this situation, the lack of physical activity, unhealthy diet and poor mental health status should be of greater attention. This is the reason why “Mental Wellness”, “Regular Exercise” and “Balanced Diet” are the main health promotion themes of the BHBHK Campaign.

### **Public Adhered to Unhealthy Lifestyle despite Recognizing the Ability and Responsibility to Change**

The BHBHK Research Committee opines that unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and poor mental health can certainly be modified by individual’s efforts. The BHBHK survey showed that

**a majority of the working population recognized their abilities to improve health ( 65.4% ) , and agreed that they should take the most responsibility towards their own health ( 76.1% )**

<sup>3</sup>. However, as found in the BHBHK survey, most of them were actually not taking the responsibility for their own health as they had a number of unhealthy behaviors including about 80% (78%) of them were physically inactive<sup>4</sup>, whereas aver 50% ( 50.6% ) consumed unhealthy diet<sup>5</sup> and over 30% ( 30.4% ) were under stress<sup>6</sup>. “Being responsible for one’s health is the best way to prevent serious diseases. Prevention is always better than cure. Good health starts from simple lifestyle modifications” stated Prof. Cecilia Chan.

The Health InfoWorld and the BHBHK Research Committee, which is comprised of psychologist, endocrinologist, sports scientist, dietitian and health communications professionals, has high hope that a practical health promotion programme could be created based on the well-established foundation of researches, studies, and experiences and statistics. With the revolutionary promotion approach adopted in the brand new stage of the BHBHK activities, it is hoped that health awareness and the practice of healthy behaviors would penetrate every corner of the community to create a better and healthier Hong Kong.

### **Introduction to the Li Ka Shing Foundation**

The Li Ka Shing Foundation was established in 1980 to nurture a culture of giving. Mr. Li believes that this can be accomplished by focusing on capacity empowerment through education and the building of a caring society through medical and healthcare projects. The Li Ka Shing Foundation and other private charitable foundations established by Mr. Li have supported numerous philanthropic activities with grants, sponsorships, and commitments of approximately HK\$7.6 billion.

For further information, please visit: [www.lksf.org](http://www.lksf.org)

#### **Notes :**

<sup>1</sup> The World Health Organization. The World Health Report 2003-Shaping the Future

<sup>2</sup> Relevant information of Oxford Vision 2020

<sup>3</sup> Survey was conducted from July 2000 to March 2002 with 4,797 interviewees

<sup>4</sup> Research of ‘Better Health for a Better Hong Kong’ announced at 21 April 2002

<sup>5</sup> Research of ‘Better Health for a Better Hong Kong’ announced at 3 February 2002

<sup>6</sup> Survey was conducted from July 2000 to March 2002 with 4,797 interviewees