

Walking Together in Healthy Bay Area – “Celebrating the 75th National Day 10 000 Steps a Day Walking Challenge 2024” Kick-off Ceremony (with photos)

The Health Bureau (HKB) and the Department of Health (DH) today (November 1) held the "Celebrating the 75th National Day 10 000 Steps a Day Walking Challenge 2024" Kick-off Ceremony to promote the health benefits of walking. On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Hong Kong will for the first time partner with the Greater Bay Area (GBA) Mainland cities to jointly promote walking under the theme of "Walking Together in Healthy Bay Area" to mark the celebration. Shenzhen and Zhuhai also held the Kick-off Ceremony of their walking activities today. The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, and the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, officiated at the Kick-off Ceremony, while other officiating guests included Legislative Council Member Mr Tommy Cheung; the Under Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee; the Controller of the Centre for Health Protection of the DH, Dr Edwin Tsui; the Chairperson of the Task Group on Promotion of Physical Activities, Dr Lui Siu-fai; the Vice-chairperson of the Task Group on Promotion of Physical Activities, Dr Lobo Louie, and Ms Shelley Lee.

Addressing the ceremony, Professor Lo said, "I sincerely thank the GBA Mainland Cities for their support in promoting walking together on the same day for the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the National Day, as well as promoting a healthy lifestyle among the GBA residents. I would also like to express gratitude for the enthusiastic participation and support in this event from various sectors of community, and I am particularly pleased to meet the 'people of the same age as our motherland' here today (that is, being born in 1949), including the Legislative Council Member Mr Tommy Cheung and Ms Lee Lai-kuen, Shelley."

He emphasised, "Like many other regions and countries, Hong Kong is confronted with the threats arising from an ageing population and non-communicable diseases, and insufficient physical activity is one of the key risk factors of non-communicable diseases, but yet this risk is modifiable. According to the DH's Student Health Service Annual Health Report for 2022-23 school year, around 90 per cent of students had an insufficient level of physical activity, i.e. not meeting the World Health Organization (WHO)'s recommendation of doing at least 60 minutes of daily moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity. As for members of the public aged 18 or above, according to the Population Health Survey 2020-22 conducted by the DH, 24.8 per cent performed an insufficient level of physical activity, i.e. not meeting the WHO's recommendation of doing at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity; or at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity; or an equivalent amount of physical

activity throughout the week. Therefore, I call on everyone, whether school children or adults, to perform more physical activities. School children could participate in the 'e+ Go to Park' launched by the HHB in collaboration with the Education Bureau, the DH and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD); members of the public aged 18 or above could seize this opportunity to participate in the '10 000 Steps a Day' Walking Challenge."

He added, "Walking is simple form of physical activity and brings plenty of health benefits including maintaining a healthy body weight, improving cardiopulmonary function, strengthening muscles and bones, relieving symptoms of anxiety and depression, as well as reducing the risk of chronic diseases."

To encourage members of the public to increase their physical activities, the DH launched the "10 000 Steps a Day" Campaign in 2022. For the second Walking Challenge in 2023, a total of 16 000 people participated, with the total number of steps accumulated exceeding 5 billion.

The Walking Challenge commences today and lasts for one month. In addition to individual Walking Challenge, it also includes a Workplace Organisation Walking Challenge, aiming to raise public awareness of the physical and mental health benefits of walking, encourage friends and colleagues to support each other and walk 10 000 steps daily. Adults are recommended to gradually increase their daily step goal to 10 000 based on an individual's own physical conditions, abilities, pace and circumstances. Any amount of walking is better than sitting, even if the goal cannot be reached yet.

Participants enrol in the Walking Challenge and record their step count during the challenge period through "e+Life", the health challenge platform launched under the eHealth app. Participants reaching a daily average of 10 000 steps during the challenge period can be awarded an electronic certificate of achievement from the "e+Life" platform. For more details about the Walking Challenge in Hong Kong, please visit the event website of the Walking Challenge (www.10000stepsaday.hk/?lang=en) and the website of "e+Life" (app.ehealth.gov.hk/elife-overview).



