

(Hong Kong, November 5, 2006)

'Respiratory Health Walkathon 2006'
Over 300 Attendants Taking Steps on Road to Health

'Hong Kong Thoracic Society 20th Anniversary and the Hong Kong Lung Foundation 10th Anniversary Celebration Ceremony' was held on 5th November 2006 (Sunday) at Centenary Garden. Guests and participants took part in the "**Respiratory Health Walkathon 2006**" in Tsim Sha Tsui East before the ceremony commenced. More than 300 doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, patients as well as members from related organizations attended and turned out in full force to spread messages of respiratory health and diseases.

The Walkathon was aimed at encouraging people to exercise more, so as to improve lung and heart function. The route started from Hong Kong Coliseum, through footbridges and ended at Centenary Garden. We were honored to have Dr. LEONG Che Hung, GBS, JP, Chairman of HKSAR Elderly Commission, accompanied by Dr. Loretta Yin Chun YAM, Chairman of Hong Kong Lung Foundation, Dr. Thomas Yun Wing MOK, President of Hong Kong Thoracic Society, Mr. CHAN Lun Shue, Alan, Chairman of Asthma Society and Mr. CHAN Wing Kai, Honorary Secretary of Asthma Society, to be our guests of honor who kicked off the walkathon in a simple ribbon-cutting ceremony. Officiating guests announced the '**Respiratory Health Declaration**' and took part in the 'Respiratory Health Exercise' to spread the messages of the importance of exercise and various ways to maintain good lung health. Besides, Health check and Exhibition booths, including booths of 'Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA)', 'Smoking cessation', 'Lung function testing and health check', 'COPD & Asthma', 'Pneumonia & Influenza and Avian Influenza', 'Teach you how to read a chest radiograph', etc., were set up to educate citizens on lung health and diseases.

Since their establishment, Hong Kong Thoracic Society (HKTS) and Hong Kong Lung Foundation (HKLF) have been making every effort to increase public awareness of the importance of lung health and respiratory diseases. According to the statistics provided by the Department of Health, HKSAR Government, lung cancer was the leading cause of cancer deaths. In 2004, over 3,000 people died from the disease, accounting for about 30% of all cancer deaths. Cigarette smoking is the most important cause of Lung cancer. A research conducted by the School of Public Health, University of Hong Kong, reported that, in Hong Kong, the overall cost of smoking to the society is \$5.3 billion per year (Government revenue from tobacco duty is only \$2.5 billion per year). A previous survey carried out by HKTS and HKLF also found that the proportion of elderly who had asthma symptoms or cough has increased significantly in ten years' time. This meant our respiratory health condition may be

declining. At present, diseases of the respiratory system is the 2nd leading cause of admission to all hospitals (public and private) in Hong Kong, accounting for over 10% of all causes of hospitalizations (Average No. of admissions is around 3,500 per month).

To further study the extent and importance of lung disease, HKTS and HKLF will carry out a large-scale '**Burden of Lung Diseases**' (**BOLD**) survey which was introduced in the Anniversary Ceremony. Dr. Thomas Mok, President of HKTS, said, 'In Hong Kong, pneumonia and COPD are the 4th and 5th leading causes of death respectively. Patients suffering from lung diseases consume large amount of health resources and pose a huge of burden to society of Hong Kong".

The BOLD project has already been carried out in Western countries such as Britain but similar studies of burden of lung diseases are lacking in Asian countries. In the present study, 10 common respiratory diseases will be selected and their death rate, hospitalization rate as well as cost of treatment will be collected and analyzed. Random samples of respiratory patients will be surveyed to investigate the rate of health care utilization and productivity loss. The study results will provide valuable information for health care planning by Hospital Authority and Government

Hong Kong Thoracic Society
Hong Kong Lung Foundation