# Highlights from PHARM+Excellence 2025: Driving Standards and Innovation in Primary Healthcare Pharmacy

Theme: Shaping the Future of Primary Healthcare Pharmacy: Quality Standards, Interprofessional Collaboration and Research

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PHARM+Excellence 2025: Driving Standards and Innovation in Primary Healthcare Pharmacy was successfully held on 21 June 2025 at the HKUMed Campus. The conference brought together over 370 participants, including healthcare professionals, academics, policymakers, and social service providers, to explore strategies for advancing community pharmacy services in primary healthcare.

Under the theme "Shaping the Future of Primary Healthcare Pharmacy: Quality Standards, Research, and Interprofessional Collaboration", the event featured a comprehensive programme of keynote speeches, expert panels, interactive symposiums, poster presentations, and a pre-conference community pharmacy tour. These sessions highlighted innovations in service delivery, evidence-based practices, interprofessional education, and policy alignment.

The conference served as a pivotal platform for cross-sector dialogue, professional development, and collaborative action, reinforcing the critical role of pharmacists in achieving accessible, integrated, and patient-centered primary healthcare. Notably, over 90% of participants agreed that the conference was a valuable learning experience, affirming its impact and relevance to current primary care challenges and reform directions.

The conference also served as a catalyst for post-event actions, with key strategic directions identified:

I. Translating Insights into Policy and Practice
   - Consolidating conference learnings to inform clinical guidelines, service standards, and ongoing policy consultations supporting the Government's Primary Healthcare Blueprint.

II. Strengthening Professional Capacity and Service Quality
   - Consolidating conference learnings to inform clinical guidelines, service standards, and ongoing policy consultations supporting the Government's Primary Healthcare Blueprint.

III. Sustaining Stakeholder Engagement
   - Leveraging the PHARM+ Network to co-develop new care models, share knowledge, and address emerging community needs.

IV. Fostering International Collaboration
   - Building global partnerships for joint research, training exchanges, and service benchmarking.

The success of PHARM+Excellence 2025 marks a key milestone in the ongoing efforts to elevate the role of pharmacists in the primary healthcare system.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

- To promote the development and implementation of quality standards in community pharmacy services within the primary healthcare setting.
- To showcase innovative service models, research findings, and best practices in primary healthcare pharmacy both locally and internationally.
- To strengthen interprofessional collaboration and education across healthcare, academic, and social service sectors for holistic patient care.
- To align community pharmacy services with governmental healthcare policies and reform directions, contributing to an integrated primary healthcare system.
- To foster professional development and capacity building among pharmacists and primary healthcare providers through knowledge exchange and strategic dialogue.
- To cultivate a platform for networking, collaboration, and stakeholder engagement that supports the continuous advancement of people-centered care.

## 3. CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The PHARM+Excellence 2025 featured a robust and multidisciplinary programme that highlighted the evolving role of pharmacists in Hong Kong's primary healthcare system. The event provided a timely platform to reflect on the achievements of the Jockey Club PHARM+ Community Medication Service Network (JC PHARM+ Project), and to explore pathways for scaling up pharmacist-led services as part of healthcare reform.

### Opening Ceremony

The ceremony opened with remarks from leaders in academia, government officials, and healthcare, affirming the critical role of pharmacy in primary healthcare transformation. Professor Chak Sing Lau, Dean of Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, The University of Hong Kong, welcomed participants, followed by welcome speeches from Dr. Fei-chau Pang (Commission for Primary Healthcare, Health Bureau, Hong Kong SAR Government), Professor Sophia Chan (Convenor, Advisory Committee, JC PHARM+ Project), and Professor Ian Wong

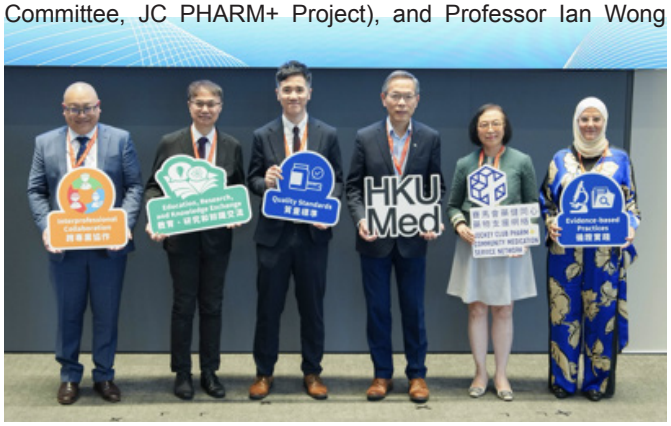


***Photo 1**. Opening Ceremony of PHARM+Excellence 2025*

***Photo 2**. Opening Ceremony of PHARM+Excellence 2025*

(Principal Investigator, JC PHARM+ Project). Collectively, the speakers reaffirmed that strengthening pharmacy practice is central to achieving the government's Primary Healthcare Blueprint, particularly in preventive care, chronic disease management, and care continuity at the community level. **(Photo 1 & 2)**

### Keynote Speeches

Dr. Tony Ha, Assistant Commissioner for Primary Healthcare 2, Health Bureau, Hong Kong SAR Government, presented the government's roadmap for integrating community pharmacies into Hong Kong's primary healthcare system. He highlighted the pressing need to address an ageing population and rising chronic disease burden through accessible, pharmacist-led care in the community. Citing the Chronic Disease Co-Care (CDCC) Pilot Programme, Dr Ha illustrated how community pharmacy can support early detection, improve health outcomes, and reduce system costs. A key focus was the development of service models and quality standards under the Primary Healthcare Commission, including a Guideline of Practice for Community Pharmacy, a sub-directory for pharmacists under the Primary Care Directory (PCD), and a Community Drug Formulary (CDF). These initiatives will be piloted within DHC networks and progressively scaled. He emphasized the role of digital health tools such as eHealth+ in supporting service integration. **(Photo 3)**

***Photo 3**. Keynote Speech by Dr. Tony Ha*

Professor Timothy Chen, Professor of Medication Management, School of Pharmacy, The University of Sydney and International Advisor of JC PHARM+ Project, provided an international perspective on advancing quality standards in pharmacy-led primary care. Drawing on models from Australia, the UK, the USA, and Japan, he emphasized the global trend toward expanded roles for pharmacists in delivering medication management, chronic disease services, and preventive care. He underscored the importance of establishing measurable structures, processes, and outcomes using the Donabedian model, and highlighted quality indicators and system-level enablers such as workforce training, digital readiness, and medicines policy. Professor Chen advocated for continuous quality improvement based on the ECHO (Economic, Clinical, Humanistic Outcomes) model and called for greater integration of pharmacists into team-based primary care to improve health outcomes and service sustainability. **(Photo 4)**

***Photo 4**. Keynote Speech by Professor Timothy Chen*

These keynotes set the tone for the conference by aligning policy priorities with on-the-ground innovation and situating the development of community pharmacy in Hong Kong within a global context.

**Panel Discussion: The Future of Quality Standards in Primary Healthcare Pharmacy**

Moderated by Professor Sophia Chan, the panel brought together Dr. Tony Ha, Professor Timothy Chen, and Professor Ian Wong to explore how quality in community pharmacy can be defined, measured, and scaled within Hong Kong's evolving primary healthcare landscape. **(Photo 5)**

***Photo 5**. Panel Discussion on The Future of Quality Standards in Primary Healthcare Pharmacy*

Key insights emerged across several key dimensions:

- Professor Timothy Chen reinforced ECHO model as a comprehensive framework for assessing service quality in primary healthcare pharmacy. He emphasized that robust and multi-dimensional outcome measures, including clinical effectiveness, patient satisfaction, and cost-efficiency, are essential for driving quality improvement and demonstrating value to stakeholders.

- Professor Ian Wong highlighted the PHARM+ Network's role as a testbed for quality development, sharing that structured service protocols, real-time patient feedback systems, and internal evaluation mechanisms are being developed to support continuous quality improvement. He also emphasized the profession's ongoing effort to enhance public awareness of primary healthcare and to clarify the expanding role of community pharmacists as integral care providers.

- Dr. Tony Ha reinforced the importance of system-level enablers, such as service commissioning, district-based care models, and sustainable funding, to support pharmacist-led care. He cited the CDCC Pilot Programme as a successful example of how structured primary care services can improve early detection, patient outcomes, and cost-effectiveness. He also emphasized how visibility through accreditation of service providers, guideline development, and quality assurance mechanisms can enhance accountability and encourage participation in government-supported programmes.

Looking ahead, the panel collectively envisioned pharmacists as core members of the primary care team, empowered by clear role definitions, inter professional training, data-sharing infrastructure, and ongoing evaluation. The discussion reinforced that quality in pharmacy must be both evidence-informed and system-supported, with strong alignment to health policy, patient needs, and service sustainability.

**Symposium 1: Establishing Quality Standards in Community Pharmacy**

This session examined strategies to define, implement, and sustain quality across diverse community pharmacy settings in Hong Kong and Macau.

- Dr. Franco Cheng, Lecturer from Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy at the University of Hong Kong, shared a structured approach to service standardization, including the development of operational manuals, pharmacist training, and quality management protocols. He emphasized the importance of embedding continuous improvement into everyday practice to uphold care standards.

- Mr. William Chui, Chief Pharmacist at the Hospital Authority, presented the Hospital Authority's accreditation experience and outlined the principles of accreditation, including integrity, transparency, and evidence-based practice, as crucial foundations. He advocated applying these principles to community pharmacy, highlighting patient safety, regulatory compliance, and staff competence as core pillars.

- Ms. Carol Chow, Head of Pharmacy and Research at Gleneagles Hospital Hong Kong, showcased how Gleneagles Hospital Hong Kong adapted private hospital pharmacy standards for its Community Pharmacy. She illustrated a governance model integrating clinical education, HKU oversight, continuous quality improvement of pharmacy services, and regulatory compliance. The Community Pharmacy will support upcoming government primary healthcare initiatives and innovative services development.

- Mr. João Lei, Chefe de Divisão de Farmácia, Serviços de Saúde de Macau, discussed Macau's experience in implementing a drug refill service supported by a centralized IT system for prescription tracking and patient engagement. He described how continuous service improvement can safeguard medication safety and support primary heathcare development in Macau.

Together, the panel underscored the need for a unified quality assurance framework tailored to the community setting, supported by inter professional governance, workforce development, and scalable digital infrastructure. Their experiences collectively pointed toward a future where quality in community pharmacy is standardized, measurable, and embedded within the broader primary healthcare ecosystem. **(Photo 6)**

***Photo 6**. Panel Discussion in Symposium 1: Establishing Quality Standards in Community Pharmacy*

**Symposium 2: Interprofessional Education and Collaboration in Primary Healthcare**

This session emphasized the importance of team-based care and interprofessional education (IPE) in building an integrated primary healthcare system. Speakers shared successful models of collaboration that position pharmacists as core contributors to holistic patient care.

- Ms. Jody Chu, Senior Lecturer from Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy at the University of Hong Kong, described how HKUMed's community pharmacy placements expose students to IPE in real-world environments.

- Professor Vivian Lee, Associate Professor from Centre for Learning Enhancement And Research (CLEAR) at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, presented compelling evidence from international and local studies showing how IPE enhances competencies in communication, collaboration, and shared decision-making. She advocated for integrating IPE across the education continuum to foster system-wide impact.

- Dr. Ning Fan, Founder of Health in Action, shared community-based experiences of pharmacists managing social determinants of health. He highlighted that pharmacists, when trained to collaborate with NGOs and social workers, can go beyond dispensing to address complex, patient-centred needs in vulnerable populations.

- Ms. Catherine Wong, Multicultural Pharmacy Service Coordinator of Health in Action, outlined the 5E's approach, including exploration, engagement, education, empowerment, and experience, to experiential pharmacy education, aiming to address multicultural health needs and challenges.

- Mr. Shek Ming Leung, Lecturer from Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy at the University of Hong Kong, showcased a collaborative mental health service involving pharmacists, nurses, and social workers. Using a structured Medication Management Service, the team successfully deprescribed inappropriate psychotropics for people with intellectual disabilities, showing the power of multidisciplinary input and non-pharmacological strategies. **(Photo 7)**

***Photo 7**. Panel Discussion on Symposium 2: Interprofessional Education and Collaboration in Primary Healthcare*

The symposium concluded with a discussion on how embedding pharmacists into interdisciplinary pathways not only enhances care quality but also supports workforce resilience. A working group under the HKU Comprehensive Primary Healthcare Collaboratory is now developing a new curriculum to deepen interprofessional competencies through experiential learning and professional shadowing across sectors.

**Symposium 3: Innovations and Insights from Research in Primary Healthcare**

This symposium showcased how evidence from local studies and pilots informs practice transformation and supports policy development in primary care pharmacy.

- Dr. Edmund Yiu, Research Assistant Professor from Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy at the University of Hong Kong, shared qualitative findings from the PHARM+ Network, highlighting that pharmacist-led services like Minor Ailment Service (MAS) and Medication Management Services (MMS) improved patient engagement and service delivery. He emphasized that cross-sector collaboration, training, and public awareness are essential for scaling these innovations in primary care.

- Professor Eric Wan, Assistant Professor from Department of Pharmacology and Pharmacy and Department of Family Medicine and Primary Care at the University of Hong Kong, presented the interim outcomes of the CDCC Pilot Scheme, showcasing

how the program significantly improved clinical parameters and projected a potential prevention of over 9,000 cardiovascular events and 11,000 deaths over 10 years at just 10% population uptake. He emphasized pharmacists' contributions and the scheme's cost-effectiveness, advocating for its broader adoption across Hong Kong.

- Professor Celine Chui, Assistant Professor from School of Nursing at the University of Hong Kong, introduced the P-CARDIAC model, an AI-powered cardiovascular risk prediction tool tailored for Chinese populations, demonstrating its integration into pharmacist-led services and its potential to enhance risk communication and early prevention in primary care.

- Professor Peter Tanuseputro, Clinical Professor from Department of Family Medicine and Primary Care at the University of Hong Kong, called for a shift from hospital-centric end-of-life care to early, community-based palliative interventions, aligned with patients' preferences to age and die at home. He emphasized the vital role pharmacists can play in home-based care teams, particularly in medication support and symptom relief. **(Photo 8)**

***Photo 8**. Panel Discussion on Symposium 3: Innovations and Insights from Research in Primary Healthcare*

These studies validate the clinical and system-level impact of pharmacist-led services and support further investment in community-based research and evaluation. During the discussion, the speakers believed that policy changes or stakeholder collaboration are essential for scaling up innovations. Key strategies include increasing public awareness, addressing community health needs, establishing referral pathways for interprofessional communication and collaboration, advocating for top-down policy from the Government, and exploring thesuccessful overseas models.

**Poster Presentations**

The PHARM+Excellence 2025 featured eleven practice abstracts that showcased pioneering efforts in advancing pharmacy services, informatics, and multidisciplinary collaboration in Hong Kong's evolving primary healthcare system. These diverse initiatives reflect growing momentum toward integrating community pharmacy into patient-centred, preventive, and data-informed care. Collectively, these initiatives demonstrate that community pharmacists are increasingly positioned as key contributors to an integrated, person-centered primary healthcare system. From clinical service delivery to public education and digital innovation, the abstracts highlight scalable models that align with Hong Kong's Primary Healthcare Blueprint and global trends in pharmacy-led care. **(Photo 9)**

***Photo 9**. Poster Exhibition in PHARM+Excellence 2025*

## 4. PRE-CONFERENCE COMMUNITY PHARMACY TOUR

As a prelude to the PHARM+Excellence 2025, a Pre-conference Community Pharmacy Tour was organized on 19–20 June 2025, offering participants the opportunity to gain first-hand insight into the operational models, service delivery innovations, and interdisciplinary collaborations that define Hong Kong's evolving community pharmacy landscape. A total of seven site visits were conducted across the PHARM+ Community Medication Service Network and other NGO-operated pharmacies. Each session was hosted by frontline pharmacists and programme leaders, with tailored walkthroughs and interactive briefings. **(Photo 10 & 11)**

***Photo 10**. Pre-conference Community Pharmacy Tour in PHARM+ Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Community Pharmacy*

***Photo 11**. Pre-conference Community Pharmacy Tour in PHARM+ Pok Oi Hospital Community Pharmacy*

## 5. IMPACT AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

The PHARM+Excellence 2025 served as a catalyst for advancing the role of pharmacists in primary healthcare and reinforced the importance of cross-sector collaboration, evidence-based practice, and service innovation. The positive impact of the conference was reflected in post-event feedback, with over 90% of participants agreeing that the event was a valuable learning experience. Building on the insights shared throughout the conference, several strategic directions have been identified for post-conference action:

### Translating Insights into Policy and Practice

Key themes and recommendations from keynote speeches, symposium discussions, and panel dialogue will be consolidated into a summary report to inform ongoing policy consultations, particularly in support of the Government's Primary Healthcare Blueprint. These insights will also guide the development and refinement of clinical guidelines, service standards, and operational protocols for community pharmacy services.
Strengthening Professional Capacity and Service Quality
Targeted training and professional development workshops will be organized under the PHARM+ initiative to upskill pharmacists and frontline staff. Priority areas include minor ailment service delivery, chronic disease management, interprofessional collaboration, and quality assurance. These efforts aim to promote consistency, enhance service quality, and empower community pharmacists to take on expanded clinical roles in primary care.

### Sustaining Stakeholder Engagement through the PHARM+ Network

The PHARM+ Network will continue to serve as a collaborative platform for pharmacists, academics, healthcare providers, and NGOs. Post-conference engagement will include follow-up meetings, knowledge-sharing forums, and working groups to co-develop innovative care models, evaluate service outcomes, and pilot new initiatives in response to emerging community needs.

### Fostering International Collaboration

Building on the participation of international speakers and collaborators, the PHARM+ team will explore opportunities for joint research, training exchanges, and comparative studies with overseas institutions. These partnerships will support the global benchmarking of local pharmacy services and facilitate the adoption of best practices across borders.

## 6. Acknowledgements

The Organizing Committee of PHARM+Excellence 2025 extends its sincere thanks to all who contributed to the success of this event. We are especially grateful to our speakers, moderators, panelists, and poster presenters for their invaluable insights, which enriched discussions and advanced the dialogue on the future of primary healthcare pharmacy. We also thank our partners from the University of Hong Kong, the Health Bureau, community pharmacy networks, academic institutions, NGOs, and healthcare professionals for their active engagement and ongoing support. Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for their visionary support of the JC PHARM+ Project. Their generous funding and strategic guidance have been instrumental in driving innovation, service development, and capacity building in community pharmacy to support primary healthcare development in Hong Kong. Together, we are shaping a more integrated, accessible, and patient-centered primary healthcare system with community pharmacists as key enablers of community care.

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