



Main entrance to Hong Kong Adventist Hospital, Stubbs Road, 2016.
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Hong Kong Adventist Hospital (1964–)

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Spurred by the “burden to begin medical work in the city”,¹ Hong Kong Adventist Hospital (*abbreviated* HKAH; *Chinese*: 香港醫院; *Pinyin*: Gāng ǎng Yǐ Yuàn) was established to serve the people of Hong Kong SAR² and beyond. HKAH is a member of the Adventist Health global network, and is governed by the Chinese Union Mission and Northern Asia-Pacific Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.³ The Church believed that “the medical work operating in the modern facilities of HKAH will serve as an entering wedge into the hearts of these who know not the truth”.⁴ Accordingly, the non-profit HKAH serves the community in alignment with the Adventist philosophy of holistic health restoration, maintenance, and promotion. At the time of writing, it consists of four geographically separate yet interrelated facilities: HKAH-Stubbs Road (abbreviated HKAH-SR), HKAH-Tsuen Wan (abbreviated HKAH-TW), and Adventist Medical Center-Causeway Bay, and Adventist Medical Center-Tai Koo Place.⁵

The Beginning

In 1959,⁶ the Seventh-day Adventist Church sought assistance from the then 80-year-old American physician Harry W. Miller, affectionately known as the “China doctor” due to his decades of service in China, to establish a Hong Kong-based hospital.⁷ Miller did not just stop at one, he instead established two,⁸ echoing what President Nixon said about him, that he had left an “admirable legacy of compassion and accomplishment”.⁹

Building the First Hospital at Tsuen Wan

The Church decided upon Tsuen Wan in the New Territories as the home of the first hospital, since the small coastal town, where people led an economically modest life, severely lacked healthcare services in the area.¹⁰ Strong support for this initiative came from Hong Kong’s colonial government, in the form of a land grant made available for building.¹¹ Next, Miller and veteran missionaries, Ezra L. Longway and Robert M. Milne, immediately began the work of planning and fundraising,¹² to a warm reception from the local community. As recalled by Dr. Heald, a friend and the first medical director, “with Dr. Miller’s reputation, there was no problem in raising funds”.¹³

Donors included the Hong Kong Jockey Club, which provided funds for the ground floor, while Tong Ping Yuen, owner of Southseas Textile Factory, donated an entire floor; the United States government funded the equipment.¹⁴ Although funding was still being raised for the upper level the new hospital, then known as the Adventist Sanitarium-Hospital of Hong Kong, opened May 22, 1964, with a bed capacity of 100.¹⁵ In 1970 another floor with 50 beds was added with a grant from the U.S. Government’s China Refugee Fund,¹⁶ making it a six-story building.¹⁷

In its early years the hospital mainly served factory workers, villagers living in squatter huts, marine residents living on sampans,¹⁸ and the large number of refugees pouring into the city.¹⁹ To provide affordable healthcare and maintain operations, the hospital relied on charitable donations from local businesses until the establishment of its sister institution in 1971, HKAH-SR, and received continual financial support from the Church.²⁰ Accredited in 1971 from the Far Eastern Division Hospital Accrediting Board,²¹ HKAH-TW remains the only private hospital in New Territories West.²²

Building the Second Hospital on Hong Kong Island

Harry Miller, Ezra Longway, and Robert Milne started planning for the second hospital in the late 1960s with a two-fold objective.²³ First, it was to channel revenue to Tsuen Wan Adventist Hospital for the maintenance of services in the industrial area.²⁴ Next, they aimed to extend quality healthcare services to Hong Kong Island residents by offering “first-class medical care with accommodations that will satisfy patients from even the highest level of society”.²⁵ It was to be built on a plot of ground known as “La Rue Villa,”²⁶ formerly “housing for church missionaries”, and would “overlook the city” from its perch on Victoria Peak.²⁷

Chan Shun, the founder and former Chair and Managing Director of Crocodile Garments Limited, contributed the first HK\$1 million, with donations from many other philanthropists following.²⁸ “Most of the funds were raised by a public solicitation program over a ten-year period”,²⁹ with Miller and Longway personally raising more than 60% of the HK\$10 million.³⁰ On May 4, 1971, Hong Kong Adventist Hospital was declared open by Dr. Gerald Choa, Director of Health Services for the City of Hong Kong, and Eugenia Chan, wife of Chan Shun,³¹ with the dedication prayer by General Conference Secretary C. O. Franz.³² After the ceremony, Chan Shun registered as the first in-patient.³³

The “first circular structure in the city dedicated to medical work”³⁴ soon earned a city-wide reputation for quality healthcare services and state of the art-technology.³⁵ Specialty clinics have been implemented, with the involvement of experienced physicians over a span of specialties, notably in cardiology and oncology.

Since their inception, both hospitals served the community on a not-for-profit basis, using revenue from their services to finance day-to-day operations, purchase new equipment, add facilities, and build new Adventist medical centers.³⁶

Name and Organizational Changes

With the addition of a second hospital on Hong Kong Island, the name of the first hospital was changed to Hong Kong Adventist Hospital (Tsuen Wan Branch), while the latter was named Hong Kong Adventist Hospital (Victoria Branch) in 1971. Although the two hospitals were 14 miles (22 kilometers) apart, they were joined under one administration.³⁷

While the single administrative structure was maintained for another 13 years, the name of the two branches changed several times. From 1972 onwards, the Hong Kong Island hospital was simply abbreviated to “Hong Kong Adventist Hospital.” The Tsuen Wan hospital first changed to “Adventist Hospital, Tsuen Wan” in 1972, and then to “Hong Kong Adventist Hospital, Tsuen Wan” from 1973 to 1983.³⁸

By 1983, the difficulties of administrating at two sites were recognized; hence, the two branches became independent in 1984. Their names were changed to “Tsuen Wan Adventist Hospital (TWAH)” and “Hong Kong Adventist Hospital (HKAH)” respectively. These are probably the best-known names for the two hospitals, as they were used for 30 years, from 1984 to 2014.³⁹ In 2015, the two were again brought under one administrative structure, with their names changing to the current ones: Hong Kong Adventist Hospital-Tsuen Wan (HKAH-TW), and Hong Kong Adventist Hospital-Stubbs Road (HKAH-SR).⁴⁰

HKAH Attached School of Nursing⁴¹

In 1967 the School of Nursing opened⁴², offering a three-year diploma course. In 1974 the school moved into a new three-story complex, which included a 250-seat auditorium and staff apartments.⁴³ In 1988 it received a “Recognition of School of Nursing” by the Hong Kong Nursing Council. It closed in the 2000s.

Staff

In the beginning, apart from nurses who were trained in-house, almost all staff members, including doctors, administrators, and department heads were missionaries from outside Hong Kong.⁴⁴ They received only humble remunerations for their work.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, it was the “simple, systematic, and sacrificial contributions of (these) individual members that produced marvelous offerings”⁴⁶ and established HKAH as a premium employer, attracting talents. HKAH has now changed from a closed staff system to an open one, with full-time Seventh-day Adventist staff.

HKAH Foundation

Hong Kong Adventist Hospital Foundation⁴⁷ was established in 1999 to provide medical treatment and health education services to benefit the underprivileged in Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Nepal.⁴⁸ Several funds have been set up, such as for cancer, eye, heart, and orthopedics.⁴⁹ Notably, two fund-raising events were created: the Women of Hope in 2014, and Men of Hope in 2016,⁵⁰ events that have seen funds raised in the millions of dollars. Additionally, a Healthy Lifestyle Fund was launched in 2016 to promote healthy living concepts to the community and provide health education services to those in need.⁵¹ Overall, 1,900 individuals have been positively impacted to date.⁵²

Chaplaincy

The hospital’s chaplaincy departments continue to play an essential role. The hospitals, situated “away from the din and hustle of the city, (are) ideal for meditation and close communion with God”⁵³. Notable highlights include regular prayer meetings, medical missionary programs, and staff morale boosters,⁵⁴ which proved more relevant than ever during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Lifestyle Management Center

Established at both Hospitals, the Lifestyle Management Center (LMC) has tirelessly advocated healthy living concepts for the education and benefit of hospital staff, the wider Hong Kong community, and even neighboring countries through NEWSTART (Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Temperance, Air, Rest, Trust in God)⁵⁵ Further, comprehensive lifestyle assessments by registered dietitians and other qualified healthcare professionals are provided for the prevention, management, and treatment of diseases and health related problems.⁵⁶

AMC - Causeway Bay and AMC - Tai Koo Place

These centers are “one-stop medical clinics”⁵⁷ that offers premium service and high-end clinical care. The Adventist Medical Center (AMC) at Causeway Bay (abbreviated AMC-CB) was added to the HKAH brand in 2014, and supports cataract operations for the Eye Fund. Adventist Medical Center - Tai Koo Place (abbreviated AMC-TKP) was opened in 2020, offering day surgeries that are convenient, comprehensive, and compassionate.⁵⁸

Major Milestones

The following is a summary of the major milestones in accreditation/certification received and facility & service

upgrades in HKAH:

2000: Full accreditation from the Trent Accreditation Board (United Kingdom) for 10 years.

2006: Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation.

2009: Hong Kong Accreditation Service (HJKAS)'s HOKLAS for Hospital Laboratory Accreditation.

2012: International Network of Health Promotion Hospital awarded the WHO-HPH certification.

HKAH - Stubbs Road

Facilities:

First Cyberknife

First HPH in China, Hong Kong and Macau (LMC)

First Mitra Clip Center in China

First single-site da Vinci robotic surgery

First TAVI in Hong Kong private hospital

O-Arm O2 with StealthStation8 Navigation Imaging System – first private medical institution on Hong Kong island⁴⁹

23 May 2019, first Hybrid CCIC with the latest Bi-plane⁶⁰

Services:

1985: Pioneer Heart Center with one-stop services⁶¹, and includes Rapid Access Chest Pain Clinic⁶²

2009: World-class clinical laboratory and pathology department

2012: Comprehensive Oncology Center with personalized cancer treatment services⁶³

Exceptional Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Services⁶⁴, with 24/7 Urgent Care

Professional Orthopedic and Spine teams offering minimally invasive surgery (MIS)⁶⁵

Well-equipped operating rooms with latest medical technology like the da Vinci robotic system⁶⁶

Accreditations:

2010, 2014: Accredited by Australian Council on Healthcare Standards (ACHS)

2013: ISO 22000 certification for food safety management systems

2017: Central Sterilization & Reprocessing Unit received ISO9001:2015, ISO13485:2003, and ISO14971:2007 on Medical Device

HKAH - Tsuen Wan

Facilities:

2015: Major 25-story new building expansion, to have 470 beds, 5 operating theaters for MIS, 4 endoscopy rooms, and upgraded Diagnostic Imaging Department that has PET/CT Ga-68 PSMA Scanning Service⁶⁷

Services:

2011: Heart Clinic established, with Cardiac Catheterization and Interventional Center (CCIC)⁶⁸

2012: Lithotripsy Center, with experienced urologists and charity collaborations⁶⁹

2016: MIS Center, with wide range of advanced procedures for multiple fields⁷⁰

Expanded Specialty Centers including Heart, Urology, Orthopedic, Women's Health, Family Medicine, and Health Assessment⁷¹

Accreditations:

2010, 2014, 2018: Accredited by ACHS

2015: Hong Kong Institute of Engineers approved a biomedical engineering graduate training scheme, the first program led by a Hong Kong private medical institution.

List of Presidents: HKAH-Stubbs Road⁷²

R. W. Burchard, 1971-1979 (combined); D. L. Dunfield, 1979-1983 (combined); Virgil P. Morris, 1983-1989; Henry P. Friesen, 1989-1995, Simon Tomarere, 1995-2000, Y. C Wong, 2001-2005, F. Yeung, 2006-2015, Alex Lan, 2016-present.

List of Presidents: HKAH-Tsuen Wan⁷³

P. Tang, 1964-1967; W. Runyan, 1967-1970; R. W. Burchard, 1970-1979 (combined); D. L. Dunfield, 1979-1983 (combined); F. Yeung, 1983-1992; A. Phua, 1992-1995; P. Wong, 1995-2000; Y.C Wong, 2001-2004; F. Yeung, 2005-2014; Alex Lan, 2015-present.

Unwavering Mission To Provide Quality Care

Over the decades, Hong Kong has gone through numerous socio-economic changes. Growing with their communities, the two campuses of Hong Kong Adventist Hospital have provided compassionate healthcare services in line with their "Total Health" mission, which includes introducing new medical technologies⁷⁴ Furthermore, healthy living and preventative healthcare are promoted in a practical and accessible way through community outreach programs at both hospitals, via the Foundation and the Lifestyle Management Centers, including body checks, seminars, and various other events.⁷⁵

While so many things are evolving, the Adventist dedication to serve the people remains unchanged. This includes proactively meeting the needs of the community, staying in touch with governmental policy developments, and providing first-rate medical services,⁷⁶ while maintaining a safe hospital environment and protecting their staff and community through such challenges as COVID-19. The hospital's accreditations affirm its placement amongst some of the top international hospitals, and avow its unwavering commitment towards constant progress, patient safety, and quality care for the Hong Kong community.

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