
Findings of Opinion Survey on Supplementary Healthcare Financing

September - December 2011

Food and Health Bureau

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government

January 2012

Opinion Survey on Supplementary Healthcare Financing (September - December 2011)

(A) Summary findings

1. On the Government's role in relation to private healthcare services and private health insurance [Chart 1], 71% of respondents agreed that the Government should encourage using private healthcare services for those who could afford it, such that public healthcare services could better focus on serving the low-income families, disadvantaged groups and people with severe illness. [Q1] 69% agreed that the Government should provide assistance to those who had taken out private health insurance so that they could continue to pay the premium and use private healthcare services in their old age so as to relieve the burden on public healthcare services. [Q2] 91% agreed that the Government should regulate private health insurance in order to provide better protection to the consumers. [Q3] 84% agreed that the Government should enhance competition and transparency of the private health insurance market. [Q4] 92% agreed that the Government should regulate private healthcare services in order to provide better protection to the consumers. [Q5] 85% agreed that the Government should enhance competition and transparency of the private healthcare service market. [Q6] When compared with the corresponding results of the opinion survey conducted during Nov 2010 to Apr 2011, i.e. before the release of the Healthcare Reform Second Stage Public Consultation Report in July 2011, the level of support for most of the items have recorded slight increases, except for Q4 and Q6 with more or less the same results.
2. Nearly 70% (69%) of the respondents supported the Government to implement the Health Protection Scheme for voluntary participation, which is higher than that (63%) before the release of the Healthcare Reform Second Stage Public Consultation Report. [Q7 / Chart 2]
3. Most of the respondents (almost 70% or above) agreed that under the Health Protection Scheme, insurance companies should comply with the following requirements, with not much change when compared with the results from the survey before the release of the Second Stage Consultation Report. [Chart 3]
 - 75% agreed on no turn-away of subscribers and guaranteed renewal for life. [Q8]
 - 68% agreed that insurance companies should cover the pre-existing medical conditions of the insured after the required waiting period. [Q9]

- 71% agreed that the premium loadings for high-risk subscribers should not be higher than the prescribed upper limit of the Scheme. [Q10]
- 87% agreed that subscribers could change insurance companies or they would remain insured on switching jobs, leaving employment or upon retirement, and their original coverage and no-claim discount could be carried over. [Q11]
- 70% agreed that insurance companies should list out the premium for different age groups and make reference to the premium adjustment guidelines for any change in the premium schedule. [Q12]
- 74% agreed that insurance companies should offer specified no-claim discounts to the subscribers. [Q13]
- 75% agreed that insurance companies should submit to the Government all information on insurance costs, including claims, commissions, administrative fees and other expenses, as well as information on profits. [Q14]
- 79% agreed on standardizing the definitions, terms and conditions of the insurance policies in order to minimize any argument arisen from claims. [Q15]

4. As regards views on the other features of the Health Protection Scheme, majority of the respondents (generally above 70-80%) agreed that the Government should take the following actions under the Scheme. When compared with the corresponding results from the survey before the release of the Second Stage Consultation Report, slight increases are recorded for Q16 and Q17 whereas decreases for Q21 and Q22. [Chart 4]

- 92% agreed on the establishment of a medical claims arbitration mechanism for handling any complaints arising from claims in order to protect the rights of the insured. [Q16]
- 79% agreed on the introduction of packaged charging for private healthcare services so that the public could estimate the total medical charges to be paid when they use private healthcare services. [Q17]
- 83% agreed on stipulating that the insurance industry should set up a risk pooling mechanism for the claims of high risk persons, such as those with chronic disease, so that they could be insured while the premium for other insured persons would not be raised substantially. [Q18]
- 80% agreed on legislating to regulate the premium and profit margin of the participated insurance companies. [Q19]
- 79% agreed on legislating to regulate the medical charges of private hospitals and medical practitioners. [Q20]
- 73% agreed that the Government should provide health insurance if

insurance companies could not provide healthcare insurance products that meet the requirements of the Health Protection Scheme. [Q21]

- 70% agreed that the Government should provide private beds and healthcare services if private hospitals and medical practitioners could not provide sufficient healthcare services with packaged charging. [Q22]
- Besides, about 60% (58%) of the respondents agreed that the Government should require the insured who have received incentives under the Health Protection Scheme to save for paying premium in their old age. [Q23]

5. On whether to subsidize different groups of people to join the Health Protection Scheme, most of the respondents (70% or above) agreed that the Government should provide subsidy to the following groups of people. Slight drops in the level of support are noted when comparing with corresponding results of the survey conducted before the release of the Second Stage Consultation Report. [Chart 5]

- 82% agreed to subsidize the elderly subscribers on their premium, and the amount of subsidy to be provided in their old age should be proportional to the length of staying insured under the Scheme. [Q24]
- 71% agreed to subsidize the high-risk subscribers on their premium so that the premium of other subscribers would not be substantially increased arising from their participation. [Q25]
- 70% agreed to subsidize the first-time subscribers during the first few years of subscription. [Q26]

6. To support the implementation of the Health Protection Scheme, about three-quarters (74%) of the respondents agreed with the Government's proposal on increasing the number of hospital beds in private hospitals. [Q27] Besides, more than 90% agreed on increasing the manpower of doctors (94%) and nurses (96%). [Q28 and Q29] The level of support for increasing the manpower of doctors and nurses intensified when comparing with the survey before the release of the Consultation Report. [Chart 6]

7. 71% of the respondents agreed that the Government should allow specialist doctors from places outside Hong Kong, through accreditation, to practise in Hong Kong in order to increase the manpower of doctors. [Q30] In order to enhance doctor manpower, respondents agreed that the Government should allow the following types of people, after passing the accreditation requirements, to practise in hospitals in Hong Kong. 71% agreed to allow Hong Kong residents who had acquired overseas specialist qualification, 64% agreed allowing specialist doctors from places other than the mainland of China, while

there were also 44% agreed to allow specialist doctors from the mainland of China. [Q31 to Q33] Marked drop can be observed in the level of support for allowing specialist doctors from the Mainland to practice in Hong Kong when comparing with corresponding results of the survey before the release of the Consultation Report. [Chart 7]

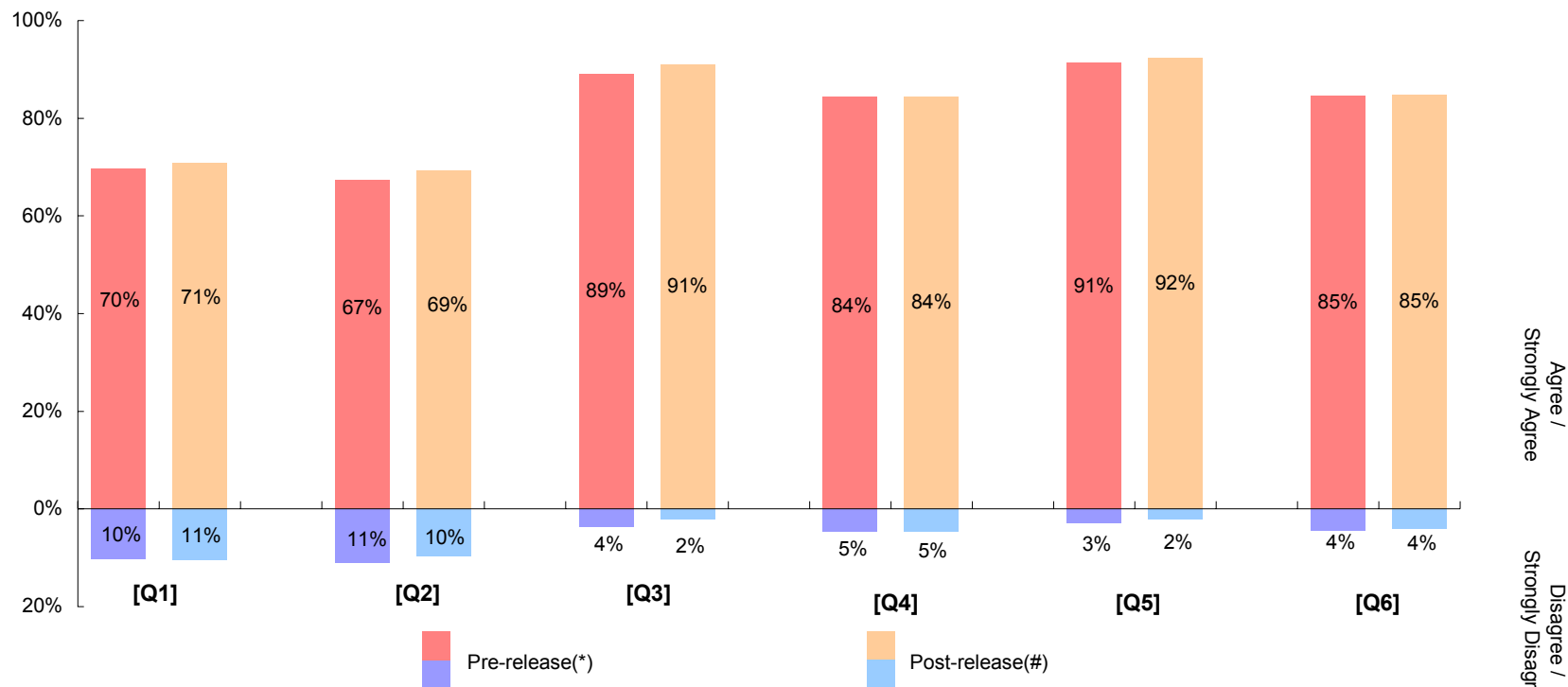
(B) Background

1. The Government commissioned Consumer Search HK Ltd. to conduct an opinion survey on supplementary healthcare financing from September to December 2011.
2. The opinion survey was conducted via telephone interview. During the period, two rounds of the survey had been conducted and a total of 2 008 persons were successfully interviewed.
3. The opinion survey solicited the public's views on the voluntary supplementary healthcare financing scheme, the proposed Health Protection Scheme, for comparing with the corresponding results from the survey conducted during November 2010 to April 2011, i.e. before the release of the Healthcare Reform Second Stage Public Consultation Report in July 2011.
4. As there were plenty of questions to be asked in the survey, two slightly different sets of questionnaires were used and thus, not every question was asked in each round of the survey. A list of questions included in the two rounds of the survey and the fieldwork period of the two rounds are given in **Annex I**.

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Opinion Survey on Supplementary Healthcare Financing

Chart 1: Views on Government's role in relation to private healthcare services and insurance



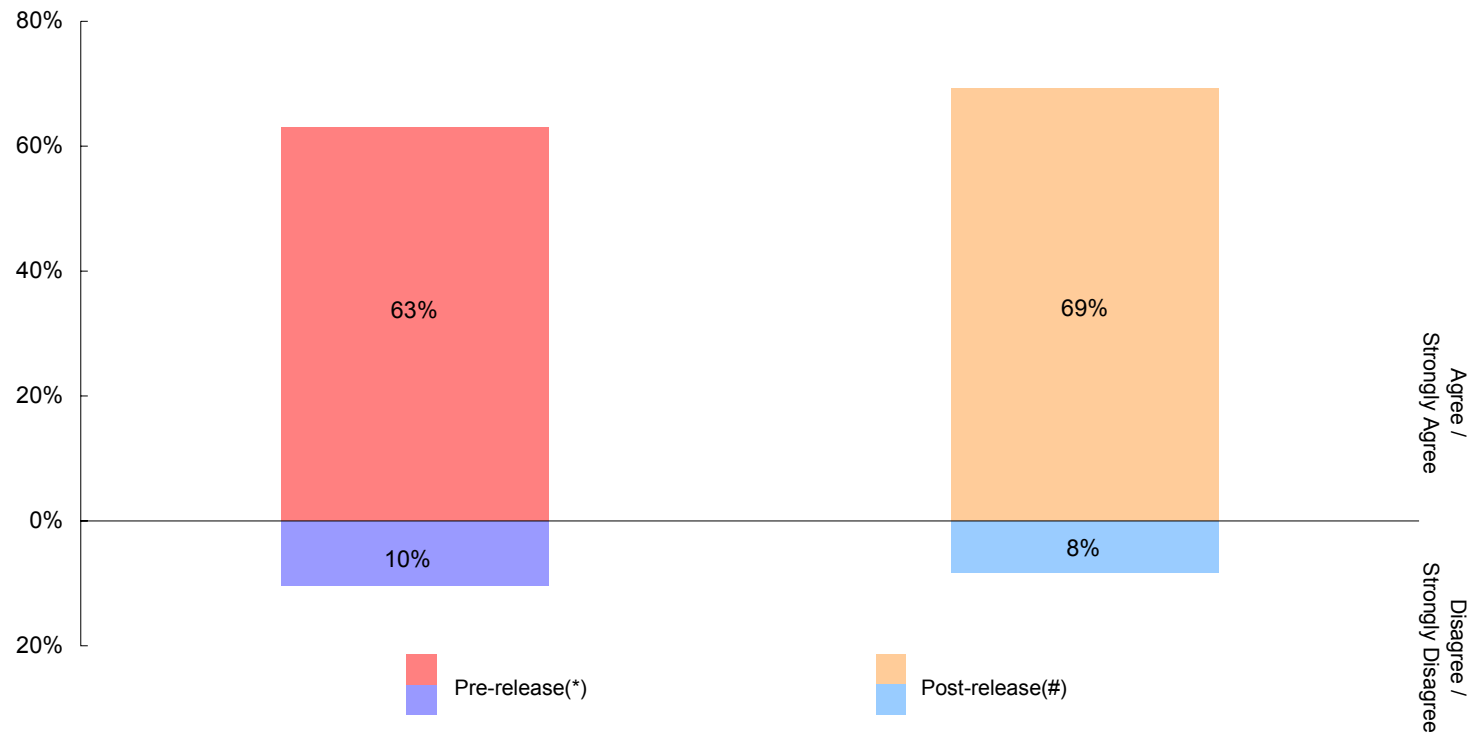
(*) Result of survey conducted during Nov 2010 to Apr 2011, i.e. before release of HCR 2nd stage consultation report in July 2011

(#) Result of survey conducted during Sep to Dec 2011, i.e. after release of HCR 2nd stage consultation report in Jul 2011

- [Q1] Do you agree that the Government should encourage using private healthcare services for those who could afford it, such that public healthcare services could better focus on serving the low-income families, disadvantaged groups and people with severe illness?
- [Q2] Do you agree that the Government should provide assistance to those who had taken out private health insurance so that they could continue to pay the premium and use private healthcare services in their old age, so as to relieve the burden on public healthcare services?
- [Q3] Do you agree that the Government should regulate private health insurance in order to provide better protection to the consumers?
- [Q4] Do you agree that the Government should enhance competition and transparency of the private health insurance market?
- [Q5] Do you agree that the Government should regulate private healthcare service in order to provide better protection to the consumers?
- [Q6] Do you agree that the Government should enhance competition and transparency of the private healthcare service market?

Opinion Survey on Supplementary Healthcare Financing

Chart 2: Views on implementing Supplementary Healthcare Financing Scheme



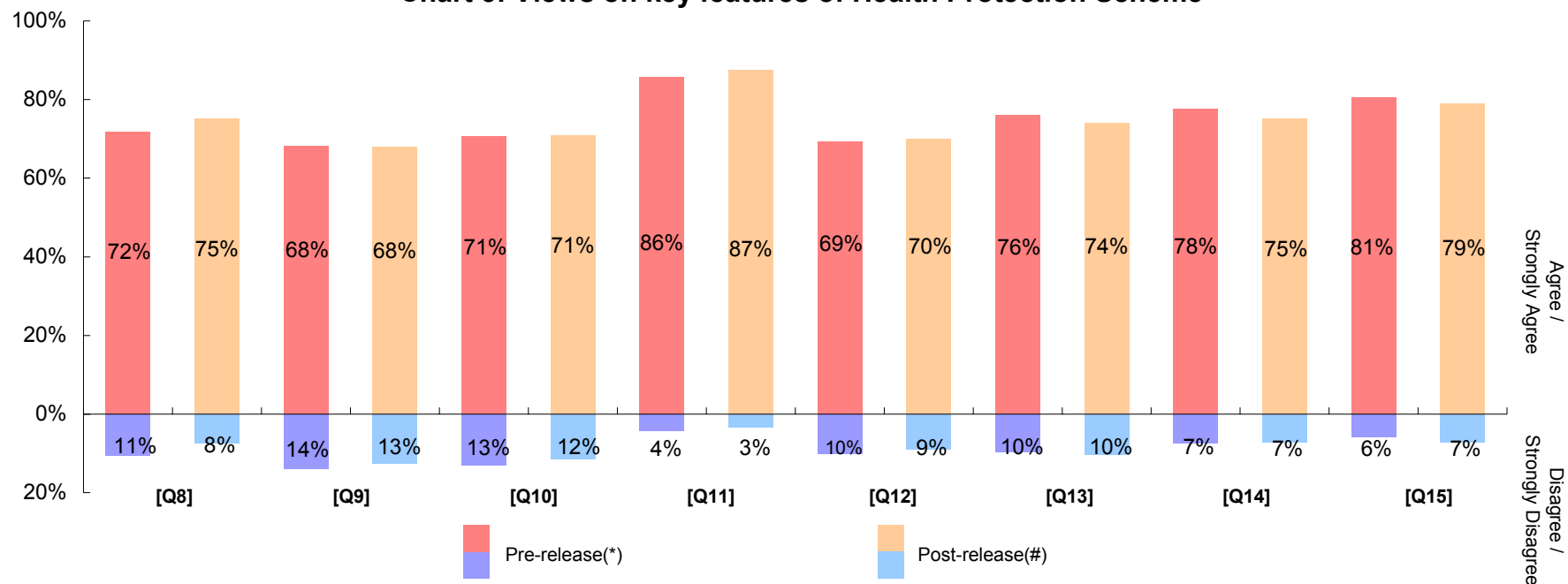
(*) Result of survey conducted during Nov 2010 to Apr 2011, i.e. before release of HCR 2nd stage consultation report in July 2011

(#) Result of survey conducted during Sep to Dec 2011, i.e. after release of HCR 2nd stage consultation report in Jul 2011

[Q7] (Introduction: The Government proposed the setting up of a voluntary Health Protection Scheme, in which private health insurance and private healthcare services would be standardized and regulated by the Government in order to provide voluntary private health insurance to the public with the aforementioned objectives.) Do you agree that the Government should implement the Health Protection Scheme for voluntary participation?

Opinion Survey on Supplementary Healthcare Financing

Chart 3: Views on key features of Health Protection Scheme



(*) Result of survey conducted during Nov 2010 to Apr 2011, i.e. before release of HCR 2nd stage consultation report in July 2011

(#) Result of survey conducted during Sep to Dec 2011, i.e. after release of HCR 2nd stage consultation report in Jul 2011

Do you agree that under the Health Protection Scheme, insurance companies should comply with the following requirements?

[Q8] No turn-away of subscribers and guaranteed renewal for life

[Q9] To cover the pre-existing medical conditions of the insured after the required waiting period

[Q10] The premium loadings for high-risk subscribers should not be higher than the prescribed upper limit of the Scheme

[Q11] Subscribers could change insurance companies or they would remain insured on switching jobs, leaving employment or upon retirement, and their original coverage and no-claim discount could be carried over

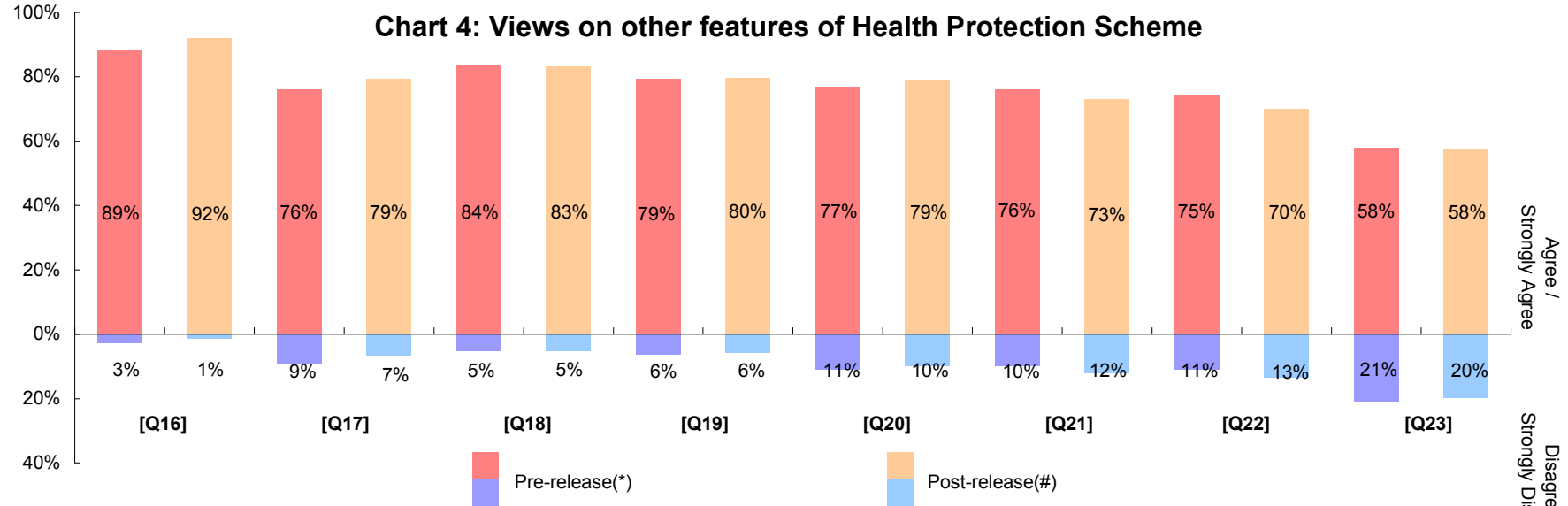
[Q12] To list out the premium for different age groups and make reference to the premium adjustment guidelines for any change in the premium schedule

[Q13] To offer specified no-claim discounts to the subscribers

[Q14] To submit to the Government all information on insurance costs, including claims, commissions, administrative fees and other expenses, as well as information on profits

[Q15] To standardize the definitions, terms and conditions of the insurance policies in order to minimize any argument arisen from claims

Opinion Survey on Supplementary Healthcare Financing



(*) Result of survey conducted during Nov 2010 to Apr 2011, i.e. before release of HCR 2nd stage consultation report in July 2011

(#) Result of survey conducted during Sep to Dec 2011, i.e. after release of HCR 2nd stage consultation report in Jul 2011

Do you agree that under the Health Protection Scheme, the Government should take the following actions?

[Q16] To establish a medical claims arbitration mechanism for handling any complaints arising from claims in order to protect the rights of the insured

[Q17] To introduce packaged charging for private healthcare services so that the public could estimate the total medical charges to be paid when they use private healthcare services

[Q18] To stipulate that the insurance industry should set up a risk pooling mechanism for the claims of high risk persons, such as those with chronic disease, so that they could be insured while the premium for other insured persons would not be raised substantially

[Q19] To legislate for regulating the premium and profit margin of the participated insurance companies

[Q20] To legislate for regulating the medical charges of private hospitals and medical practitioners

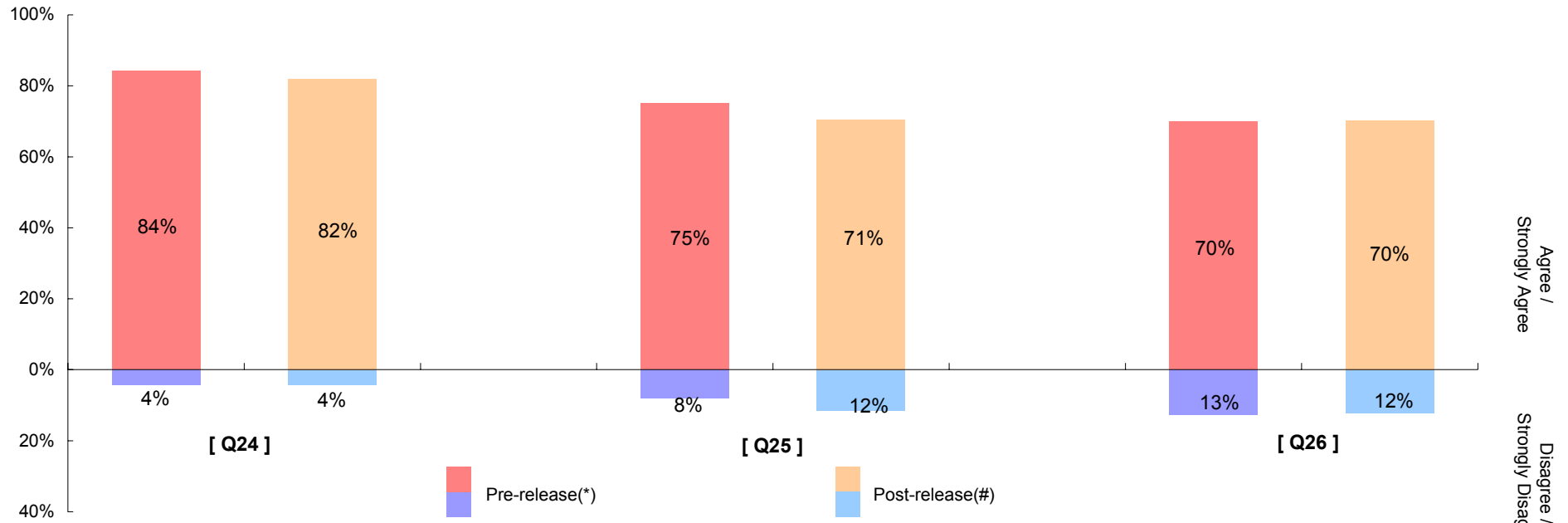
[Q21] The Government to provide health insurance if insurance companies could not provide healthcare insurance products that meet the requirements of the Health Protection Scheme

[Q22] The Government to provide private beds and healthcare services if private hospitals and medical practitioners could not provide sufficient healthcare services with packaged charging

[Q23] Do you agree that the Government should require the insured who have received incentives under the Health Protection Scheme to save for paying premium in their old age

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Chart 5: Views on Government subsidization for different groups of people to join the Health Protection Scheme

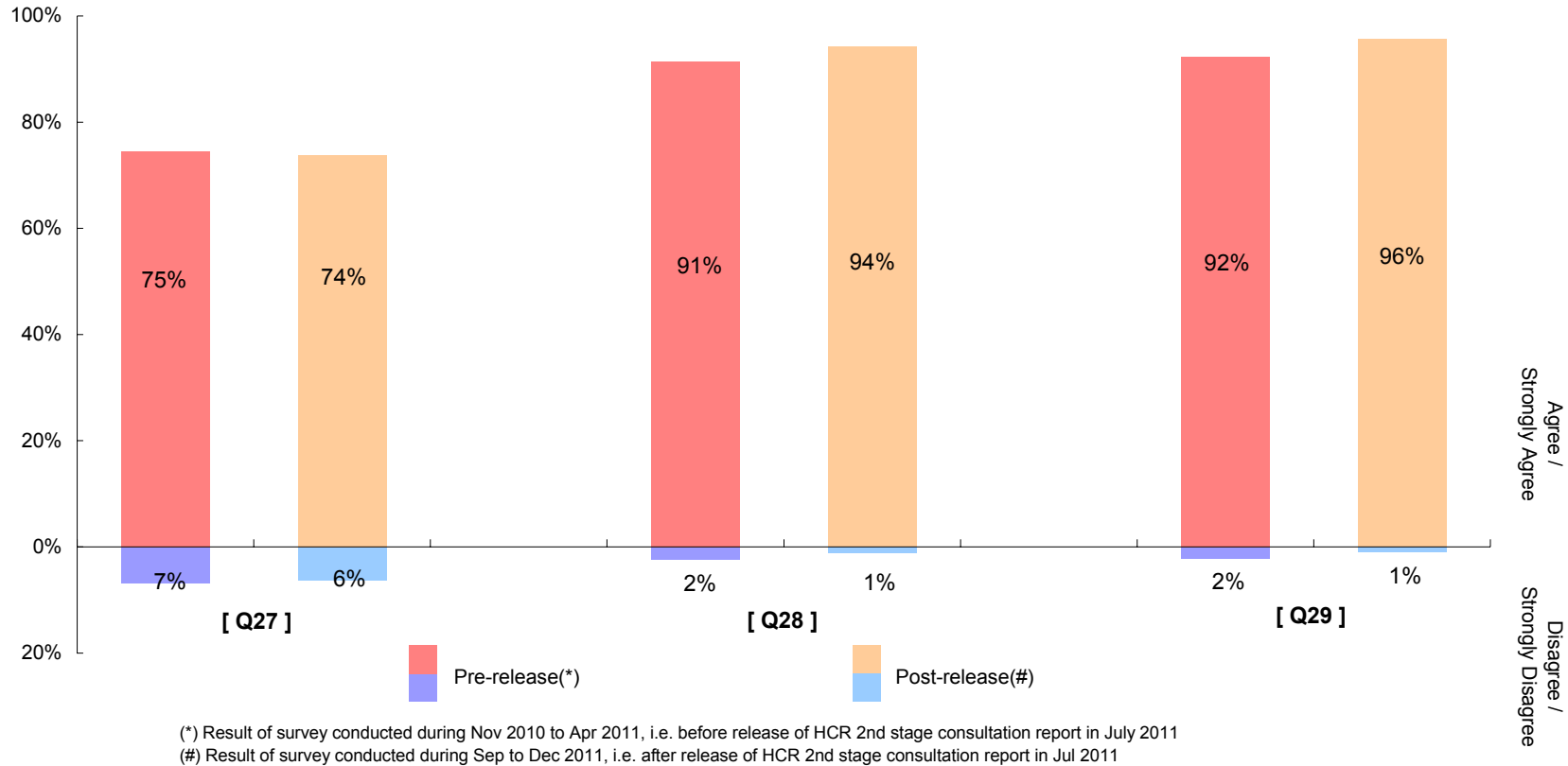


(*) Result of survey conducted during Nov 2010 to Apr 2011, i.e. before release of HCR 2nd stage consultation report in July 2011
 (#) Result of survey conducted during Sep to Dec 2011, i.e. after release of HCR 2nd stage consultation report in Jul 2011

- Do you agree that under the Health Protection Scheme, the Government should provide subsidy to the following groups of people?
- [Q24] To subsidize the elderly subscribers on their premium, and the amount of subsidy to be provided in their old age should be proportional to the length of staying insured under the Scheme
 - [Q25] To subsidize the high-risk subscribers on their premium so that the premium of other subscribers would not be substantially increased arising from their participation
 - [Q26] To subsidize the first-time subscribers during the first few years

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Chart 6: Views on various items to support implementing the Health Protection Scheme

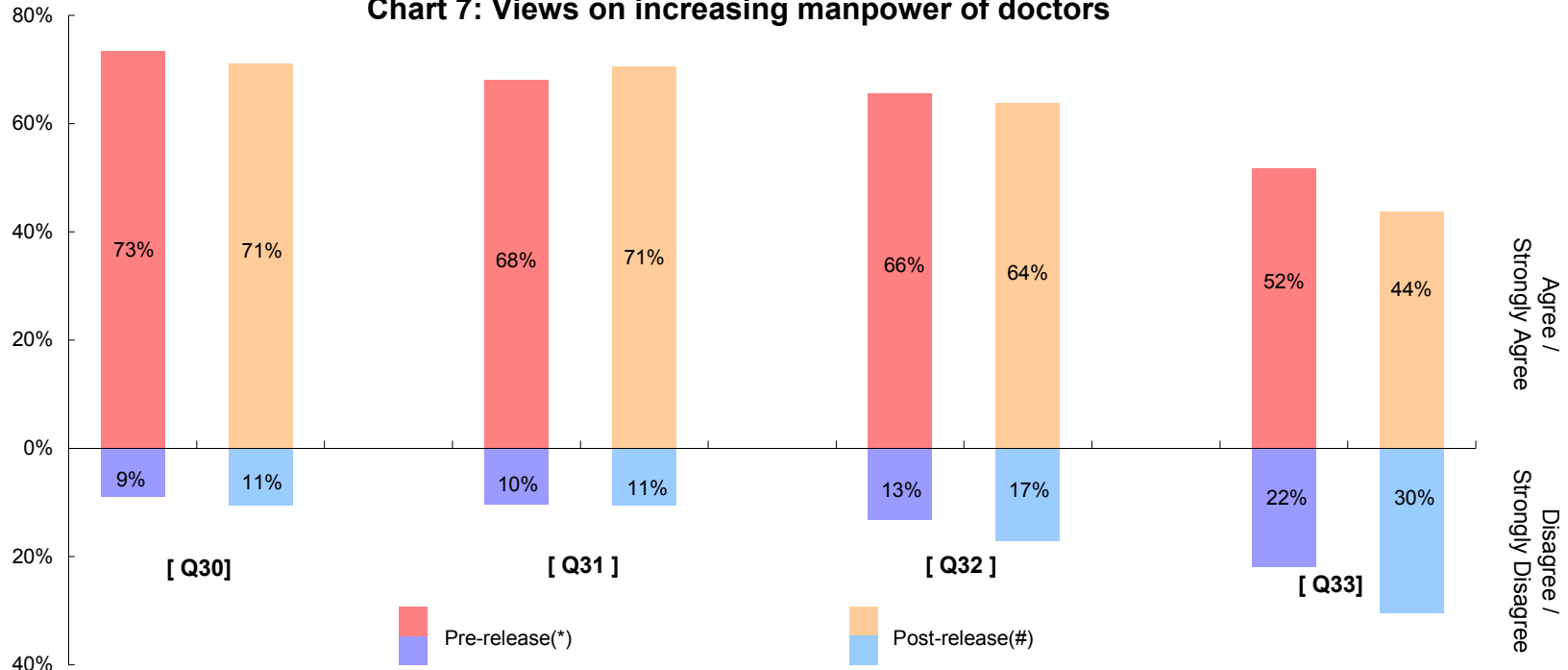


Do you agree with the Government on increasing the following three items in order to support the implementation of the Health Protection Scheme?

- [Q27] Hospital beds in private hospitals
- [Q28] Overall manpower of doctors
- [Q29] Overall manpower of nurses

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Chart 7: Views on increasing manpower of doctors



(*) Result of survey conducted during Nov 2010 to Apr 2011, i.e. before release of HCR 2nd stage consultation report in July 2011
 (#) Result of survey conducted during Sep to Dec 2011, i.e. after release of HCR 2nd stage consultation report in Jul 2011

- [Q30] Do you agree that the Government should allow specialist doctors from places outside Hong Kong, through accreditation, to practise in Hong Kong in order to increase the manpower of doctors?
- Do you agree that the Government should allow the following types of people, after passing the accreditation requirements, to practise in hospitals in Hong Kong in order to increase the manpower of doctors?
- [Q31] Hong Kong residents who had acquired overseas specialist qualification
- [Q32] Specialist doctors from places other than the mainland of China
- [Q33] Specialist doctors from the mainland of China

Opinion Survey on Supplementary Healthcare Financing

(September – December 2011)

Question	1st round	2nd round
[Q1] Do you agree that the Government should encourage using private healthcare services for those who could afford it, such that public healthcare services could better focus on serving the low-income families, disadvantaged groups and people with severe illness?	√	√
[Q2] Do you agree that the Government should provide assistance to those who had taken out private health insurance so that they could continue to pay the premium and use private healthcare services in their old age, so as to relieve the burden on public healthcare services?	√	√
[Q3] Do you agree that the Government should regulate private health insurance in order to provide better protection to the consumers?	√	√
[Q4] Do you agree that the Government should enhance competition and transparency of the private health insurance market?	√	√
[Q5] Do you agree that the Government should regulate private healthcare services in order to provide better protection to the consumers?	√	√
[Q6] Do you agree that the Government should enhance competition and transparency of the private healthcare service market?	√	√
[Q7] Do you agree that the Government should implement the Health Protection Scheme for voluntary participation?	√	√

Do you agree that under the Health Protection Scheme, insurance companies should comply with the following requirements?		
[Q8] No turn-away of subscribers and guaranteed renewal for life.	√	
[Q9] To cover the pre-existing medical conditions of the insured after the required waiting period.	√	
[Q10] The premium loadings for high-risk subscribers should not be higher than the prescribed upper limit of the Scheme.	√	
[Q11] Subscribers could change insurance companies or they would remain insured on switching jobs, leaving employment or upon retirement, and their original coverage and no-claim discount could be carried over.	√	
[Q12] To list out the premium for different age groups and make reference to the premium adjustment guidelines for any change in the premium schedule.		√
[Q13] To offer specified no-claim discounts to the subscribers.		√
[Q14] To submit to the Government all information on insurance costs, including claims, commissions, administrative fees and other expenses, as well as information on profits.		√
[Q15] To standardize the definitions, terms and conditions of the insurance policies in order to minimize any argument arisen from claims.		√

<p>Do you agree that under the Health Protection Scheme, the Government should take the following actions?</p> <p>[Q16] To establish a medical claims arbitration mechanism for handling any complaints arising from claims in order to protect the rights of the insured.</p> <p>[Q17] To introduce packaged charging for private healthcare services so that the public could estimate the total medical charges to be paid when they use private healthcare services.</p> <p>[Q18] To stipulate that the insurance industry should set up a risk pooling mechanism for the claims of high risk persons, such as those with chronic disease, so that they could be insured while the premium for other insured persons would not be raised substantially.</p> <p>[Q19] To legislate for regulating the premium and profit margin of the participated insurance companies.</p> <p>[Q20] To legislate for regulating the medical charges of private hospitals and medical practitioners.</p> <p>[Q21] The Government to provide health insurance if insurance companies could not provide healthcare insurance products that meet the requirements of the Health Protection Scheme.</p> <p>[Q22] The Government to provide private beds and healthcare services if private hospitals and medical practitioners could not provide sufficient healthcare services with packaged charging.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>
<p>[Q23] Do you agree that the Government should require the insured who have received incentives under the Health Protection Scheme to save for paying premium in their old age?</p>	<p>√</p>	
<p>Do you agree that under the Health Protection Scheme, the Government should provide subsidy to the following groups of people?</p> <p>[Q24] To subsidize the elderly subscribers on their premium, and the amount of subsidy to be provided in their old age should be proportional to the length of staying insured under the Scheme.</p>		<p>√</p>

[Q25] To subsidize the high-risk subscribers on their premium so that the premium of other subscribers would not be substantially increased arising from their participation.		√
[Q26] To subsidize the first-time subscribers during the first few years.		√
Do you agree with the Government on increasing the following three items in order to support the implementation of the Health Protection Scheme?		
[Q27] Hospital beds in private hospitals.	√	
[Q28] Overall manpower of doctors.	√	
[Q29] Overall manpower of nurses.	√	
[Q30] Do you agree that the Government should allow specialist doctors from places outside Hong Kong, through accreditation, to practise in Hong Kong in order to increase the manpower of doctors?	√	
Do you agree that the Government should allow the following types of people, after passing the accreditation requirements, to practise in hospitals in Hong Kong in order to increase the manpower of doctors?		
[Q31] Hong Kong residents who had acquired overseas specialist qualification.		√
[Q32] Specialist doctors from places other than the mainland of China.		√
[Q33] Specialist doctors from the mainland of China.		√

- Notes: 1. Questions on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents were also included in the questionnaires.
2. As there were plenty of questions in the survey, two slightly different sets of questionnaires were used in alternate rounds. √ indicates that the question was asked in relevant survey round.
3. Fieldwork period of the two survey rounds:
1st round: 15 to 24 September 2011
2nd round: 28 November to 8 December 2011

[The Chinese version of the questions was actually used in the survey. The English translation given here is for reference only.]