

Chinese Medicine clinics present an option for fighting the epidemic and rehabilitation (with photos)

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, visited the Chinese Medicine Clinic cum Training and Research Centre (CMCTR) in Tai Po District today (May 14) to meet the representatives from the organisation operating the CMCTR and resident Chinese Medicine Practitioners (CMPs), and to learn more about daily operation of the Tai Po CMCTR, including the Special Chinese Medicine (CM) Out-patient Programme (the Programme) for discharged persons who have received COVID-19 treatment.

Accompanied by the Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority (HA), Dr Tony Ko, Professor Chan met the Chairperson of United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service (UCN) Management Committee, Mr John Li; the Executive Director of UCN, Ms Esther Mok; and the Chief of Service (CM) of UCN, Dr Cheung Kit-nung. They exchanged views on the development of CM and the operation of the CMCTR and visited the consultation room, acupuncture room and CM pharmacy of the CMCTR.

"The Government has all along been committed to promoting the development of CM. It has been incorporated into the healthcare system of Hong Kong. The HA invited CM experts from the Schools of CM of three local universities, namely the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Baptist University, as well as the Chiefs of Service of the CMCTRs to set up a CM expert group in early February, to give advice on involvement of CMPs in combating COVID-19. With the facilitation and support of the Food and Health Bureau, the Programme was subsequently launched. I would like to express my gratitude for the CMPs for offering an option for rehabilitation treatment through the Programme during the current epidemic. In addition, the introduction of Government-subsidised CM service in the 18 districts in March 2020 has also better addressed the need for primary health care at district level," Professor Chan said.

The Programme was launched at CMCTRs which operate on a tripartite collaboration model involving the HA, a non-governmental organisation and a local university on April 24. It provides free CM general consultation service to discharged persons who have received COVID-19 treatment in public hospitals in Hong Kong. The service not only provides an alternative rehabilitation treatment for COVID-19 discharged patients, but also fosters the integration of CM and Western medicine and the development of related CM clinical studies.

The CMCTRs joining this Programme would provide a maximum of 10 free CM general consultations within six months from the discharge date of the patients, with no more than five doses of CM prescribed per visit according to their clinical needs (acupuncture, bone-setting (Tui-na) and other treatments are not included in this Programme).

"The United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service – The Chinese University of Hong Kong Chinese Medicine Clinic cum Training and Research Centre (Tai Po District) is the first CMCTR to provide this service. I would like to thank UCN and all CMPs of the CMCTR for the successful launch of the Programme. We are pleased that starting from mid-May, there will be more CMCTRs in other districts joining the Programme for the benefit of more patients requiring rehabilitation treatment who may reside in different districts," Professor Chan said. Apart from the Tai Po CMCTR, the other six CMCTRs joining the Programme are located in the Southern District, Kowloon City District, Sha Tin District, North District, Yuen Long District and Sai Kung District. Since the launch of the Programme, the HA has issued nearly 400 invitation letters to related discharged patients.

For details of the Programme, please contact the CM Department of the HA (telephone: 2794 3068) or visit the HA CM KINeTics (CMK) website: cmk.ha.org.hk/.

Moreover, to enhance the role of the CM sector in the anti-epidemic efforts, the Government has included the "Novel Coronavirus Epidemic Related Projects" in the CM Development Fund (the Fund) as a priority area open for application for the CM sector to undertake related training, research and promotion projects. The scope of the "CM Clinic Improvement Funding Scheme" in the Fund has also been expanded to subsidise more CM clinics so as to enhance their response to infectious diseases by upgrading their infection control facilities. The Government will continue to maintain close liaison with the CM and CM drug industries and provide more effective support in order to give full play to the strengths of CM.



