

# First patient transferred point to point to Hong Kong for treatment by direct cross-boundary ambulance transfer in GBA

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) announced today (January 10) that Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH) successfully received the first patient under the Pilot Scheme for Direct Cross-boundary Ambulance Transfer in the Greater Bay Area (Pilot Scheme) this morning. The patient was transferred to Hong Kong for treatment by a point-to-point cross-boundary ambulance. The HA expresses sincere gratitude to various units in Guangdong and Hong Kong for their swift response and proactive co-ordination, which enabled the successful activation of the mechanism in a short time for a point-to-point transfer of the patient to Hong Kong.

The 67-year-old male patient, who is suffering from respiratory failure requiring non-invasive ventilator support, departed from University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital (HKU-SZH) at around 11am and arrived at TMH at around 11.45am by the cross-boundary ambulance directly. The patient is currently receiving treatment in TMH and is in stable condition.

"The transfer of the first patient to a Hong Kong public hospital by the Direct Cross-boundary Ambulance Transfer marks a significant milestone in the development of quality healthcare co-operation in the Greater Bay Area (GBA). Throughout the transfer process, the patient was accompanied by healthcare staff, and no handover of the patient between ambulances at boundary control points of Shenzhen and Hong Kong was required. This could minimise the risk of condition changes during transfers and improve the patient's chances of recovery," said the Director (Quality and Safety) of the HA, Dr Michael Wong.

"The patient was admitted to HKU-SZH on January 7 and his condition stabilised after receiving treatment. Upon assessment by the medical team and a request from the family, the mechanism of the cross-boundary transfer was activated to arrange the patient returning to Hong Kong for further treatment. After immediate co-ordination with various units, HKU-SZH arranged a doctor and a nurse to accompany the patient transferring from Shenzhen to Hong Kong this morning. With the prior co-ordination among different units, the entire process was very smooth as the patient can stay in the ambulance when crossing the boundary," said Deputy Hospital Chief Executive of HKU-SZH Professor Anne Lee.

The Hospital Chief Executive of TMH, Dr Wong Yiu-chung, said that the TMH immediately communicated with the medical team of HKU-SZH to understand the patient's clinical condition and prepare for admitting the patient after receiving notification yesterday. Since the medical team of TMH had obtained

all necessary information and prepared for the arrangements before the arrival, the patient could be admitted to the ward for treatment immediately after the cross-boundary ambulance arrived. The entire process was highly efficient. TMH will continue to provide appropriate treatment for the patient.

The HA also extends its heartfelt gratitude to various units, including the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the People's Government of Guangdong Province, the Guangdong Provincial Public Security Department, the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, the Public Hygiene and Health Commission of Shenzhen Municipality, the Shenzhen General Station of Exit and Entry Frontier Inspection, the Shenzhen Customs District, the Office of Port of Entry and Exit of the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government, the Shenzhen Municipal Administration for Market Supervision, as well as the Health Bureau, the Security Bureau, the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the Department of Health, the Immigration Department, the Customs and Excise Department, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Fire Services Department and the Transport Department. The co-ordination and co-operation for the well-being of the patient among various units enabled this cross-boundary point-to-point transfer arrangement to be successful.

The study on the provision of land-based cross-boundary transfers for non-emergency and non-critically ill patients and the exploration of rolling out a pilot co-operation scheme for cross-boundary referrals of patients between designated public hospitals were put forward in the Outline Development Plan for the GBA. The Chief Executive also put forward in his 2023 Policy Address the initiative to explore cross-boundary ambulance transfer arrangements between hospitals in the GBA. Under the staunch support and guidance of various national ministries as well as the concerted efforts of the government departments of Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao, the Pilot Scheme was set for official launch on November 30 last year.

Under the arrangement of the Direct Cross-boundary Ambulance Transfer mechanism, upon assessment and agreement by the teams of designated cross-boundary collaborating hospitals, arrangements can be made for patients with specific clinical needs and suitable clinical conditions to be transferred directly to Hong Kong between designated hospitals in a point-to-point mode without the handover of patients between ambulances at boundary control points, thus minimising risks posed to patients during transfers.