

Government publishes gazette notice regarding drill arrangement for Pilot Scheme for Direct Cross-boundary Ambulance Transfer in GBA

The Government published in the Gazette today (August 16) the exemption of designated Shenzhen cross-boundary ambulances from the Road Traffic (Registration and Licensing of Vehicles) Regulations (Cap. 374E) (the Regulations) during a specified period, pursuant to regulation 3(c) of the Regulations so as to facilitate the drill arrangement for the Pilot Scheme for Direct Cross-boundary Ambulance Transfer in the Greater Bay Area (the Pilot Scheme).

The Chief Executive announced in the 2023 Policy Address the exploration of cross-boundary ambulance transfer arrangement in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) to enable patients with particular needs and in suitable clinical conditions be transferred directly between designated hospitals in Hong Kong and other GBA cities in a point-to-point mode without the handover of patients between ambulances at boundary control points, thus minimising the risks posed to the patients during transfer. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been proactively discussing with the Guangdong Provincial Government, the Shenzhen Municipal Government, and the Macao Special Administrative Region (Macao SAR) Government on the implementation details. The Legislative Council Panel on Health Services was briefed by the Health Bureau on the Pilot Scheme this April.

The Pilot Scheme will first roll out the arrangement of direct ambulance transfer from designated hospitals in Shenzhen and Macao to designated public hospitals in Hong Kong. Prior to the official launch of the Pilot Scheme, the HKSAR Government will conduct drills in collaboration with the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal Government to trial the cross-boundary ambulance arrangement without patients on board. To this end, the HKSAR Government exempted the designated Shenzhen cross-boundary ambulances from the Regulations during a specified period pursuant to regulation 3(c) of the Regulations to facilitate the drill arrangement. The Governments of the two places will strive to finalise as soon as possible the long-term arrangement for designated Shenzhen cross-boundary ambulances to enter Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the HKSAR Government is also in discussion with the Macao SAR Government on relevant drill arrangement.

The HKSAR Government plans to launch the one-year Pilot Scheme within this year. Announcement will be made in due course. The cross-boundary ambulance mechanism will only be activated when a prior agreement between the sending hospital (i.e. The University of Hong Kong – Shenzhen Hospital or the Conde S. Januario Hospital of Macao) and the receiving hospital (i.e. designated public hospitals under the Hospital Authority of Hong Kong) has

been reached in advance, with the medical needs, safety and interests of patients as the prime concerns while avoiding abuse of the mechanism. Subject to the effectiveness and operational experience of the Pilot Scheme, relevant government departments will consider whether and how to expand the Scheme, such as including more designated hospitals and/or extending the Scheme to a two-way arrangement.