

## Mainland Chinese medicine expert group of Central Authorities visits residential care homes for elderly (with photos)

The expert group led by the leader of the Mainland Chinese medicine (CM) expert group of the Central Authorities, Mr Tong Xiaolin, continued its visit in Hong Kong today (April 2).

Accompanied by the Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Ms Alice Lau, and representatives from the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the Food and Health Bureau (FHB), the Social Welfare Department and the Hospital Authority (HA), the expert group visited two residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) in Tai Kok Tsui and Wong Tai Sin.

The expert group received briefings by the persons-in-charge of the RCHEs on how they responded to the fifth wave of the epidemic, including the vaccination arrangements for both residents and staff members, the infection control measures in the RCHEs, and various supporting measures provided to RCHEs by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government during the epidemic.

One of the RCHEs visited by the expert group today has been participating in the Chinese Medicine Services for Residential Care Homes for the Elderly programme of the HA. The person-in-charge briefed the expert group on the recovery progress of those COVID-19 infected residents after receiving CM treatment. The expert group also exchanged views with the representative of the Chinese medicine practitioners (CMPs) of the organisation responsible for providing CM services at that RCHE on the operation mode and patients' conditions.

Having regard to the impacts of the fifth wave of epidemic to RCHEs, under the support by the FHB, the HA speedily took the lead in mobilising CMPs to participate in the Chinese Medicine Services for Residential Care Homes for the Elderly programme through community CM service providers such as universities, CM sector, CMP academic associations and non-governmental organisations, etc. A maximum of three sessions of telemedicine or outreach CM services will be provided to infected residents and staff of RCHEs. CMPs will prescribe a maximum of five doses of CM drugs for each consultation session having regard to the clinical conditions of the patient, and arrange the CM drugs be delivered to the RCHE.

The service concerned has recently been further expanded to cover CM rehabilitation consultations. Infected RCHE residents can receive a maximum of ten sessions of telemedicine or outreach CM services at the RCHE within six months of their discharge or completion of isolation. Since the launch

of the service in February this year, 205 RCHEs have participated, with over 4,900 sessions of consultation conducted. The service concerned would enable elderly patients with mild conditions to receive CM consultation in a timely manner, thereby alleviating the pressure on public hospitals, and receiving continuous CM consultation after recovery, giving full play to the strengths of CM and responding to the “one priority” (i.e. the elderly first) strategy.

Led by Mr Tong, the Mainland expert group arrived in Hong Kong on March 29 to conduct visits.

