

S for Health visits Chinese Medicine Clinic cum Training and Research Centre in Kwai Tsing District (with photos)

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, visited the Chinese Medicine Clinic cum Training and Research Centre (CMCTR) in Kwai Tsing District today (August 29) to meet representatives of the operating organisation and Chinese medicine practitioners (CMPs) of the CMCTR to get a better grasp of its operation and its involvement in integrated Chinese-Western medicine (ICWM) treatment services.

Accompanied by the Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority (HA), Dr Tony Ko, Professor Lo met the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Yan Chai Hospital, Mrs Mary Suen, to learn more about the government-subsidised outpatient services provided by the CMCTR.

Professor Lo said, "Chinese medicine (CM) constitutes an integral part of the healthcare system in Hong Kong. The Government has long been committed to driving the CM development in Hong Kong, with a view to establishing a comprehensive network for delivering government-subsidised CM services to the public. The Government will increase the quota of government-subsidised CM outpatient services at CMCTRs in the 18 districts by the end of this year to implement the policy initiative of raising the service quota to 800 000 per year as outlined in the 2022 Policy Address, thus further reinforcing the role of CM at primary healthcare level. Having regularised ICWM services earlier this year, the HA is also progressively extending such services to more hospitals with more disease areas covered in a bid to bring the strengths of CM and ICWM into full play."

During the meeting, Professor Lo fully recognised the contributions of CMPs of the CMCTR in the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic. He was pleased to learn that the CMCTR has geared up to take forward the Government's policy of increasing the quota of subsidised outpatient services by the end of this year. He is confident that the CMCTR will be able to provide strengthened services to the local community by then.

The Government commissioned the HA years ago to develop and implement the ICWM Pilot Programme so as to gain more experience in operating ICWM and CM inpatient services. The programme offers ICWM treatment services to in-patients suffering from certain disease areas (namely stroke, musculoskeletal pain and cancer palliative care) at the CMCTRs. At present, a total of eight hospitals participate in the programme in which CMPs and Western medicine (WM) doctors team up to formulate clinical treatment protocol for each of the selected disease areas. Under the programme, CMPs and WM doctors work together to assess the suitability of patients in receiving CM treatment and

offer ICWM treatment services to the suitable ones. Patients may join the relevant programme on a voluntary basis.

Among all, the CM team of the CMCTR in Kwai Tsing District work closely with the WM team of Princess Margaret Hospital to provide ICWM services for cancer patients receiving palliative treatment. Professor Lo was pleased to see the seamless collaboration of the two parties. He also expressed his appreciation and support for the CMCTR's active participation in clinical research projects.

The HA has been progressively extending the ICWM services with respect to stroke care to its public hospitals across all seven hospital clusters in 2023-24. The HA will also further explore commencement of ICWM services with respect to cancer care to support patients in different cancer stages.

Moreover, the HA launched the Greater Bay Area CM Visiting Scholars Programme last November to foster the development of ICWM treatment services. Apart from clinical professional exchanges, the Visiting Scholars Programme also helps nurture local CMPs for enhancing ICWM clinical treatment level with some 30 participating CMPs having received training to date.

Located in all 18 districts across the city, the CMCTRs offer eligible Hong Kong residents government-subsidised CM outpatient services at district level, including treatment-related services in the field of CM outpatient, acupuncture and bone setting/tui-na. On top of the government-subsidised services, the CMCTRs also provide patients with options of non-government-subsidised services. Furthermore, the CMCTRs bear the functions of nurturing CM talent and taking forward scientific research projects.

Deputy Secretary for Health Mr Eddie Lee; the Cluster Chief Executive of Kowloon West Cluster of the HA, Dr Alexander Law; the Acting Commissioner for Chinese Medicine Development of the Health Bureau, Mr Dominic Ho; and the Chief Manager (Chinese Medicine) of the HA, Ms Rowena Wong, accompanied Professor Lo on the visit today.

