

Secretary for Health inspects dental services provided for persons with special needs in Kwai Tsing District (with photos)

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, visited a residential care home for the elderly (RCHE) in Kwai Tsing and the Kwai Chung Hospital Dental Clinic this afternoon (November 3) to get a better grasp of the dental services currently provided for persons with special needs.

Professor Lo started the visit at the Kiangsu Chekiang and Shanghai Residents (Hong Kong) Association Kwai Tsing Hostel for the Elderly where he inspected the workflow of outreach dental teams in providing basic dental care services to residents of the RCHE under the Outreach Dental Care Programme for the Elderly (ODCP). He also listened to the views of the staff and residents of the RCHE on the services. After that, accompanied by the Hospital Chief Executive of Kwai Chung Hospital (KCH), Dr Desmond Nguyen, Professor Lo and his team visited the Kwai Chung Hospital Dental Clinic to learn about the special care dental services provided by the Clinic to psychiatric inpatients of KCH.

Professor Lo said, "Making reference to the view of the Working Group on Oral Health and Dental Care established last year, the Government is committed to determining and developing primary dental services suitable for different age groups with the premise of preventing oral diseases and enhancing the oral health of the community; and at the same time providing more targeted dental care services to various underprivileged groups, persons with financial difficulties, disabilities or special needs, and high-risk groups.

"In this connection, 'The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address' outlined a number of initiatives to enhance the oral health of the community, including collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to enhance emergency dental services to underprivileged groups with financial difficulties in all 18 districts across the city; strengthening of the special care dental services currently provided by the Department of Health to persons with disabilities or special needs by adding 900 quotas for new patients per year; enhancement to the Elderly Dental Assistance Programme under the Community Care Fund to allow more eligible elderly persons to receive dental services such as dental check-up, scaling, fillings and extractions, even when fitting of removable dentures is not required; and launch of the Primary Dental Co-care Pilot Scheme for Adolescents as an extension to School Dental Care Service for primary students by subsidising adolescents aged 13 to 17 to receive preventive dental care services."

In addition, the Government has all along been attaching great

importance to the oral health of residents of RCHs or elderly persons using Day Care Centres/Units for the Elderly. Those elderly persons are generally frail and may not be able to maintain their oral health, thus having difficulties to receive conventional dental care services. As such, the Government launched the ODCP since 2014. Outreach dental teams set up by NGOs visit RCHs or Day Care Centres/Units for the Elderly to provide free professional oral check-up and oral healthcare services for the elderly concerned, as well as training for their caregivers on daily oral care, with a view to enhancing the oral health of the frail elderly."

Professor Lo said, "I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all members of outreach dental teams of the ODCP for maintaining a high level of professionalism and dedication at all times in providing targeted dental care services for elderly persons and safeguarding their oral health, despite the constraints of the working environment."

The Under Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, and the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, accompanied Professor Lo on the visit today.



