

SFH attends 2021 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Forum on Traditional Medicine via video conferencing (with photos)

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, attended the opening ceremony and the plenary session of the 2021 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Forum on Traditional Medicine via video conferencing today (July 29). Professor Chan delivered a keynote speech at the plenary session and shared with leaders, diplomatic envoys stationed in China and representatives of healthcare departments from 11 countries the latest progress of the development of Chinese medicine (CM) in Hong Kong.

In delivering her speech, Professor Chan offered thanks for the unfailing support of the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine in the development of CM in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. "The Government has all along been committed to promoting the development of CM, and has been actively pushing forward development in the areas of policy and regulation, talent nurturing, research and innovation, CM services, Chinese medicines industry and more. Looking ahead, there will be greater room for CM development in Hong Kong with the support of the country through the Construction Plan for the Chinese Medicine Highlands in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (2020-2025) in terms of development directions; the commissioning of two flagship institutions, viz Hong Kong's first Chinese medicine hospital (CMH) and the Government Chinese Medicines Testing Institute; and the support for the development of the CM sector through the \$500 million Chinese Medicine Development Fund. The Government will continue to maintain close co-operation with the SCO and health authorities of its member states on various fronts in order to promote CM development in concerted efforts," Professor Chan said.

"As regards CM services, the Government has been providing government-subsidised CM out-patient services at the 18 district Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres, and Integrated Chinese-Western Medicine in-patient services at designated public hospitals for patients with selected diseases through the Hospital Authority (HA). The Government is also constructing Hong Kong's first CMH, which is expected to be commissioned in phases in the second quarter of 2025. The CMH will serve as a flagship CM institution leading the development of CM in Hong Kong, providing out-patient and in-patient services, supporting education, clinical training and research work, as well as promoting collaboration.

"Over the past year or so, the COVID-19 epidemic has remained severe globally. With the facilitation and support of the Food and Health Bureau, the HA launched the Special CM Out-patient Programme in April 2020 to provide free-of-charge CM general consultation rehabilitation out-patient

services to discharged COVID-19 patients. The Special Chinese Medicine In-patient Programme was subsequently launched in January this year to provide CM treatment services to patients at the Community Treatment Facility and the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre as another option of treatment. Both services have been well received, and also allowed CM to give full play to its strength in our anti-epidemic control efforts," she said.

The Forum is taking place in Nanchang in Jiangxi Province from July 28 to 30, with simultaneous live broadcast via video conferencing. Co-organised by the SCO Committee on Good-Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation, the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the People's Government of Jiangxi Province, the Forum set its theme as "Inheritance, Innovation, Mutual Learning and Sharing". The Forum aims to foster academic and cultural exchanges in traditional medicine among the SCO countries, with a view to promoting the modernisation and internationalisation of CM, thus making contributions to a healthier world.

