

[Hong Kong Observatory Open Day 2024](#)

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) will organise the HKO Open Day on March 23 and 24 (Saturday and Sunday) to showcase the work of the HKO.

Adopting the theme of the World Meteorological Day this year, "At the frontline of climate action", the exhibitions of the Open Day will promote public awareness on climate change and showcase how the HKO applies the latest technology to provide various services including weather forecasting, aviation weather, microclimate monitoring and radiation monitoring.

Online preregistration is required. Each applicant may request a maximum of four tickets free of charge. If there is an oversubscription, selection will be made by computer balloting. The online registration system (www.hkoopenday.gov.hk/en/registration) will accept applications from today (February 19) to noon on March 1. Successful applicants will receive tickets with a QR code by email on or before March 12.

HKO Open Day details:

Venue: Hong Kong Observatory Headquarters (134A Nathan Road, Kowloon)

Date: March 23 and 24 (Saturday and Sunday)

Time: 9.30am to 5pm

Remarks: The duration of each session is around one hour

For more information on the Open Day, please visit the HKO website: www.hkoopenday.gov.hk/en/registration.

[Government announces list of medical institutions under Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme \(with photo\)](#)

The Government announced today (February 19) that seven medical institutions in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) have been included in the Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme (Pilot Scheme), offering eligible Hong Kong elderly persons additional options of services points for using the Elderly Health Care Vouchers (EHCVs) in the GBA. Among the medical institutions included in the Pilot Scheme, five of them provide integrated services including dental services while the other

two are dental institutions. The pilot medical institutions are expected to gradually launch the relevant arrangements under the Pilot Scheme starting from the third quarter of this year and enable eligible Hong Kong elderly persons to use EHCVs to pay for services received. It is estimated that some 1.7 million eligible Hong Kong elderly persons will benefit from the Pilot Scheme.

Since the Chief Executive announced in his 2023 Policy Address the extension of coverage of the EHCVs to suitable medical institutions in the GBA, the Health Bureau and the Department of Health (DH) have been strenuously taking forward the relevant work, including conducting market research, seeking opinions and recommendations from the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, and conducting site visits between last November and early February this year.

In the process of considering GBA medical institutions for the Pilot Scheme, the Government had taken into account eight key factors, namely physical locations, service quality, experience in management and operation, service scope, service capacity, fee standards and level, fair knowledge of the operation of the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme (EHVS) and availability of advantageous services. Seven medical institutions were included in the Pilot Scheme (see Annex 1 and 2 for details) and they are:

To provide integrated services (all with dental services)

- * The First Affiliated Hospital, Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou
- * Nansha Division of the First Affiliated Hospital, Sun Yat-sen University in Nansha
- * ZhongShan Chenxinghai Hospital of Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine in Zhongshan
- * Dongguan Tungwah Hospital in Dongguan
- * Shenzhen New Frontier United Family Hospital in Shenzhen

To provide dental services only

- * Shenzhen C.K.J Stomatological Hospital in Luohu District of Shenzhen
- * Dental Bauhinia Specialty Service Center (Shenzhen)/Dental Bauhinia General Care Center (Shenzhen) in Futian District of Shenzhen

Apart from using the EHCVs to pay for services provided by Hong Kong healthcare professionals enrolled in the EHVS, eligible EHCV Hong Kong elderly users will also be entitled to use EHCVs to receive services at nine GBA medical institutions in the future. These nine medical institutions include the two current service points operated by the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital (HKU-SZH) at its hospital and at the Huawei Li Zhi Yuan Community Health Service Center. The service scope eligible for claims for the EHCVs at the seven pilot medical institutions will be largely the same as that in the HKU-SZH. Elderly persons can use the EHCVs to pay for outpatient healthcare services they received at designated medical centres or medical service departments. However, EHCVs are not applicable to inpatient services, prepaid healthcare services and day surgery procedures. In addition, EHCVs can neither be used for the sole purchase of goods,

medication, medical equipment and products, nor be redeemed for cash.

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, said, "The Pilot Scheme announced today marks breakthroughs of the EHVS in the Mainland in four areas: (1) the first time to have service points located beyond Hong Kong and Shenzhen, covering the core area of the GBA; (2) the first time to see participation of Grade III Class A high-quality Mainland medical institutions that do not involve any Hong Kong investments; (3) the first time for private medical institutions to enrol in the EHVS; and (4) the first time for professional dental institutions' enrollment. We have gone through a meticulous process in selecting the seven medical institutions with strategic planning in mind to cover the entire Pearl River Delta area for caring for Hong Kong elderly persons residing in the GBA.

"We have two objectives for implementing this Pilot Scheme. Firstly, it aims to provide more convenience and flexibility for eligible Hong Kong elderly persons residing in Mainland cities in the GBA by providing more service point options for them to utilise EHCVs to meet their primary healthcare needs and improve health condition. Secondly, it is intended to allow eligible Hong Kong elderly persons to use their EHCVs for receiving dental services across the boundary at medical institutions in Shenzhen or even other Mainland cities in the GBA, with a view to addressing the pressing demand of Hong Kong elderly persons in seeking dental services.

"I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Health Commission of Guangdong Province and relevant health commissions/bureaux of various cities for their valuable advice in the process of pressing ahead the Pilot Scheme, ranging from selection of high-quality medical institutions to the Mainland regulations which are relevant and conducive to the future monitoring of areas concerning the healthcare quality and fee level."

The DH is working on the follow-up arrangements with various pilot medical institutions, such as personnel training, financial arrangements and system configuration. The Government will also arrange for the HKU-SZH to share with all pilot medical institutions its experience and practical arrangements on the use of EHCVs in a bid to ensure smooth operation in the future. The Government expects that the pilot medical institutions will gradually launch the relevant arrangements under the Pilot Scheme starting from the third quarter of this year, with details to be announced in due course.

To ensure the proper use of public money, the DH will further examine the details of a monitoring mechanism for the Pilot Scheme so as to refine relevant arrangements. The DH will also keep in touch with the health authorities of the Mainland and solicit their assistance when necessary.

Launched by the Government in 2009, the EHVS currently subsidises eligible Hong Kong elderly persons aged 65 and above with an annual voucher amount of \$2,000 (with the accumulation limit set at \$8,000) for them to choose in their own community private primary healthcare services that best suit their health needs. Last year, the Government successfully implemented three enhancement measures to the EHVS:

- (i) extended the coverage of EHCVs to audiologists, dietitians, clinical psychologists and speech therapists;
- (ii) allowed shared use of EHCVs between spouses; and
- (iii) rolled out the three-year Elderly Health Care Voucher Pilot Reward Scheme (Pilot Reward Scheme) to provide rewards as incentives for elderly persons to make good use of EHCVs on healthcare services such as continuous preventive care and chronic diseases management

The aforementioned shared use arrangements of EHCVs between spouses and the Pilot Reward Scheme are also applicable to the Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme.

Members of the public may browse the EHVS website (www.hcv.gov.hk) or call the EHVS hotline (2838 2311) for more information on the EHVS.



[China Manned Space Exhibition period at HKMH extended](#)

Jointly presented by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the China Manned Space Agency, and organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the China Manned Space Exhibition, which has been staged at the Hong Kong Science Museum (HKScM) and the Hong Kong Museum of History (HKMH) since its opening on December 1 last year, has received an overwhelming response from the local public and tourists. As of yesterday (February 18), the exhibition had welcomed more than 280 000 visitors, with the section at the HKScM closing on the same day.

To allow more members of the public to visit the exhibition, the exhibition period of the section being staged at the HKMH will be extended to April 1 with the inclusion of new exhibits, such as a training spacesuit of the country's first astronaut, Mr Yang Liwei, and the flag of HKSAR which was brought into space by the spacecraft Shenzhou I. Visitors can still witness the extraordinary journey in achieving China's manned space development goals. For details of the exhibition, please visit the website at hk.history.museum/en/web/mh/exhibition/China-Manned-Space-

[Exhibition.html](#) or call 2724 9042 for enquiries.

In addition, starting from today (February 19), the original opening hours of the HKMH will be resumed as follows:

Mondays, Wednesdays to Fridays: 10am to 6pm
Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays: 10am to 7pm
Closed on Tuesdays (except public holidays)

MD announcement

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

The Marine Department today (February 19) reminded masters, coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels navigating in Hong Kong waters to proceed at a safe speed and exercise extreme caution because restricted visibility of less than 2 nautical miles has been reported. Appropriate sound signals shall be made when underway or at anchor. All vessels must comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collision at Sea.

Also, when radar is used without the benefit of adequate plotting facilities, the information obtained from the equipment is rather limited and should be construed accordingly.

Visibility reports are broadcast by the Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) on VHF channels 02, 12, 14, 63 and 67.

In the event of an accident, a report shall be made immediately to the VTC at Tel: 2233 7801.

Number of Mainland visitors during Chinese New Year Golden Week exceeded level of same period in 2018

A Government spokesman said today (February 18) that the eight-consecutive-day Chinese New Year Golden Week of the Mainland (February 10 to 17) ended yesterday (February 17). The total numbers of inbound and Mainland

visitors have reached and exceeded the levels of the same period in 2018 respectively. Various arrangements for receiving visitors were rolled out smoothly and visitors offered positive feedback generally. The tourism industry in Hong Kong will sustain its development momentum this year.

The Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, said, "We thank various government departments, tourism-related organisations, etc for their utmost efforts in providing good travel experiences to our visitors during the Chinese New Year Golden Week of the Mainland. The number of Mainland visitors during the Golden Week has exceeded the level in the same period in 2018, intensifying the city's ambience and also increasing the income of the catering and retail industry. The major events during Chinese New Year, including the night parade, the fireworks display, the horse race, and the Chinese New Year Cup, were very popular and created vibrant vibes. I believe visitors can feel the intense festive ambience of Chinese New Year and the unique metropolitan glamour of Hong Kong. To attract and welcome visitors, the Government will review its work on different fronts to facilitate future co-ordination and enhancement of visitors' experience."

During the eight-day Chinese New Year Golden Week of the Mainland, the Immigration Department preliminarily recorded a total of around 1.436 million inbound visitors to Hong Kong, among which around 1.255 million Mainland visitors coming to Hong Kong through various sea, land and air control points. The daily average of Mainland visitors was around 157 000, which exceeded that of the Labour Day Holiday and National Day Golden Week in 2023 by 25.3 per cent and 14.9 per cent respectively. The number of daily Mainland visitor arrivals also exceeded the daily average of the same period in 2018.

Arrival of Mainland visitors peaked on February 12 (the third day of Lunar New Year) with around 186 000 visitors arriving in Hong Kong. Express Rail Link West Kowloon received the highest daily average number of Mainland visitors, followed by Lo Wu.

A large number of visitors went to various major tourist attractions in Hong Kong during the Chinese New Year Golden Week of the Mainland, including the West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong Disneyland, Ocean Park, Ngong Ping 360, the Peak Tram, Che Kung Temple in Sha Tin, the Wishing Tree in Lam Tsuen of Tai Po, Wong Tai Sin Temple, etc, and the ambience was good. In addition, according to the trade, the overall hotel occupancy rate reached 90 per cent in the first few days of the Golden Week and exceeded 80 per cent for the Golden Week period. Different catering and retail spots were also benefited.

According to the Travel Industry Authority's registration information, around 1 980 Mainland inbound tour groups visited Hong Kong during the Chinese New Year Golden Week of the Mainland, involving around 66 000 visitors which account for around 5.3 per cent of the overall number.