

US for Health officiates at opening ceremony of Tsuen Wan District Health Centre (with photos)

Officiating at the opening ceremony of the Tsuen Wan District Health Centre (DHC) today (December 15), the Under Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, said that the Government is determined to drive district-based primary healthcare development and is gradually strengthening the role and function of DHCs as medical and healthcare resource hubs in the districts. DHCs located across all 18 districts of Hong Kong actively connect and co-ordinate various healthcare professionals and primary healthcare services in both public and private sectors at the community level to provide comprehensive medical support according to the needs of the public.

Dr Lee said, "DHCs constitute one of the key elements in the Primary Healthcare Blueprint put forward by the Government. We hope to equip citizens, through the Blueprint, with the abilities to take the driver's seat in managing their health so that they can take good care of their own health. Acting as the community support arm for citizens, the DHCs help build a stronger awareness among citizens to manage their health so that they would be more conscious of the various aspects of physical fitness, of which they should take extra care at different ages. Children can also learn the tips for living a healthy life and build healthy habits at a young age.

"For persons aged 45 or above, I strongly urge you to participate in the Chronic Disease Co-Care Pilot Scheme (CDCC Pilot Scheme) to find out if you have diabetes mellitus and hypertension, which are two common chronic diseases recorded in Hong Kong. We have another guardian angel in the community as well and that is your family doctor. We are now promoting the 'Family Doctor For All' programme. Once you join the CDCC Pilot Scheme, you can select your preferred family doctor. These family doctors are listed in the Primary Care Directory with their professional standard assured. They will take good care of you according to evidence-based clinical protocol."

As at December 14, various DHCs have assisted over 10 000 citizens in total to register for the Scheme. Under the Scheme, citizens will be matched with family doctors of their choice. At present, over 470 participating family doctors are available for matching by citizens.

The Tsuen Wan DHC, operated by the Yan Chai Hospital Board, has commenced services in phases since late December last year. Its multidisciplinary team comprises nurses, allied health professionals, pharmacists, social workers and supporting staff, and offers various government-subsidised primary healthcare services to citizens. The DHC also engages healthcare personnel in the district or nearby areas to construct a multidisciplinary network and work with other community partners that provide social welfare and healthcare services in the district, thereby co-ordinating

service referrals for citizens in need.

Located at Plaza 88, Yeung Uk Road, Tsuen Wan, the core centre of the Tsuen Wan DHC is equipped with advanced physiotherapy equipment and artificial intelligence fitness technology to apply innovative technology for the provision of effective chronic disease management services and community rehabilitation services to its members. Apart from the core centre, satellite centres located at Bellagio Mall in Tsuen Wan West and Tso Kung Square in Tsuen Wan North are now in service, while satellite centres in Tsuen Wan East and Tsuen Wan South are scheduled to start operation within this month.

The core centre of the Tsuen Wan DHC opens from 10am to 8pm on Mondays to Thursdays, from 9am to 9pm on Fridays and Saturdays, and closes on Sundays and public holidays. As for the four satellite centres, they open from 10am to 8pm from Mondays to Saturdays, and close on Sundays and public holidays. Members of the public are welcome to register as members of the DHC to enjoy the services. They may also call the hotline at 2439 8088 to enquire about relevant information of the Tsuen Wan DHC. More details of various DHCs and DHC Expresses are available on the website www.dhc.gov.hk.

Deputy Director General of the New Territories Sub-office of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Mr Ye Hu; Deputy Secretary for Health Mr Eddie Lee; the Commissioner for Primary Healthcare, Dr Pang Fei-chau; the Assistant Director of Health (Elderly Health), Dr Raymond Ho; and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Yan Chai Hospital, Mrs Mary Suen, also attended the opening ceremony today.



[Hong Kong Customs detects lobster-smuggling case involving fishing vessel \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (December 14) mounted an anti-smuggling operation in the southern waters of Hong Kong and detected a suspected smuggling case involving a fishing vessel. About 4 400 kilograms of suspected smuggled lobsters with an estimated market value of about \$1.3 million were seized.

In the anti-smuggling operation conducted in the waters off the south of Lamma Island last night, Customs spotted a suspicious fishing vessel on which several men were suspected of participating in smuggling activities. Customs officers immediately intercepted the fishing vessel and seized the batch of suspected smuggled lobsters on board.

During the operation, four men, aged between 20 and 65, suspected to be connected with the case were arrested.

An investigation is ongoing.

Customs is the primary agency responsible for the suppression of smuggling activities and has all along been combating various smuggling activities proactively at the forefront. Customs will keep up its enforcement action and continue to fiercely combat sea smuggling activities through proactive risk management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies, along with mounting targeted anti-smuggling operations at suitable times to land a solid blow against relevant activities.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).



[Statistics of payment cards issued in Hong Kong for third quarter 2023](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) published today (December 15) statistics of payment cards issued in Hong Kong for the third quarter of 2023.

The payment card statistics (see Annex) include quarterly data on credit and debit cards issued in Hong Kong under the credit and/or debit card schemes of the eight payment card scheme operators (Note 1). The HKMA began to publish the payment card statistics on a quarterly basis in June 2010 to enhance transparency of the payment card industry in Hong Kong, in line with international practice.

According to the quarterly statistics, the total number of credit cards in circulation (Note 2) was 19.54 million by the end of Q3/2023. The figure represents a 0.8 per cent decrease from the previous quarter and a 0.4 per cent decrease from the previous year. The number and value of credit card transactions (including retail sales and cash advances) (Note 3) are susceptible to seasonal factors and the general economic environment, making the trends more prone to fluctuation. The total number of credit card transactions was 275.18 million for Q3/2023, representing a 8.3 per cent increase from the previous quarter and a 13.3 per cent increase from the same period in 2022. The total value of credit card transactions was HK\$226.6 billion for Q3/2023, representing a 4.2 per cent increase from the previous quarter and a 17.2 per cent increase from the same period in 2022. Of the total transaction value, HK\$160.8 billion (71.0 per cent) was related to retail spending in Hong Kong, HK\$56.7 billion (25.0 per cent) in retail spending overseas and HK\$9.1 billion (4.0 per cent) in cash advances.

The total number of debit cards in circulation is not available due to overlapping of debit card brands in a single card. Like the number and value

of credit card transactions, the number and value of debit card transactions in relation to retail sales and bills payments (Note 4) are also affected by seasonal factors. On a quarterly basis, the total number of debit card transactions in relation to retail sales and bills payments increased 2.9 per cent to 45.71 million while the total value increased by 0.1 per cent to HK\$68.2 billion in Q3/2023. When compared to the same period in 2022, the total number decreased by 0.6 per cent and the total value dropped by 2.0 per cent in Q3/2023.

Note 1: The payment card statistics are compiled from data on credit and debit cards issued in Hong Kong by both Authorized Institutions (AIs) and non-Authorized Institutions (non-AIs) under the credit and/or debit card schemes of the eight payment card scheme operators (the card operators). The card operators, in alphabetical order, are American Express International, Inc., Discover Financial Services (Hong Kong) Limited, EPS Company (Hong Kong) Limited (EPSCO), JCB International (Asia) Ltd, Joint Electronic Teller Services Ltd. (JETCO), MasterCard Asia/Pacific Pte. Ltd., UnionPay International Co. Ltd and Visa Worldwide Pte. Limited.

Note 2: A credit card issued in Hong Kong only carries one credit card brand. The total number of credit cards in circulation refers to the total number of credit cards (i.e. cards with a credit function) issued in Hong Kong under the credit card schemes of card operators (but excluding EPSCO and JETCO, which do not operate a credit card scheme). Some of these credit cards carry debit card functions, i.e. the credit card can be used for making purchases/payments or cash withdrawal at ATMs through directly debiting cardholders' bank accounts.

Note 3: The total number/value of credit card transactions refer to the total number/value of transactions made via credit card accounts of credit cards issued in Hong Kong under the credit card schemes of card operators (excluding EPSCO and JETCO). Starting from March 2015, a Hong Kong/overseas spending breakdown of credit card retail sales transactions is provided.

Note 4: The total number/value of debit card transactions in relation to retail sales/bill payments refers to the total number/value of those transactions made via debiting cardholders' bank accounts. Some of the eight card operators do not operate a debit card scheme. Care should be exercised in combining the credit card retail sales figures and the debit card retail sales/bills payment figures because of the possibility of double counting.

Statistics of Stored Value Facilities Schemes Issued by SVF Licensees

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) published today (December 15) statistics on Stored Value Facilities (SVF) schemes issued by SVF licensees

for the third quarter of 2023.

The SVF scheme statistics (see Annex) include quarterly data on SVF schemes issued by the SVF licensees of the relevant periods. Starting from the statistics for Q1/2022, the HKMA began to publish "add value" transactions data to provide more information regarding SVF transactions (Note 1).

According to the quarterly statistics, the total number of SVF accounts in use (Note 2) was 68.78 million by the end of Q3/2023, representing a 4.5 per cent increase from the previous quarter. The total number of SVF transactions was around 2.0 billion for Q3/2023, or 0.2 per cent lower than the previous quarter. The total value of SVF transactions was HK\$168.8 billion for Q3/2023, representing a 0.4 per cent increase from the previous quarter. Of the total transaction value, HK\$47.6 billion was related to point-of-sale spending payment, HK\$23.0 billion in online spending payment, HK\$14.0 billion in P2P funds transfer and HK\$84.2 billion in add value. The total float and SVF deposit (Note 3) was HK\$17.3 billion for the end of Q3/2023, 4.6 per cent higher than the previous quarter.

As compared with the end of Q3/2022, the total number of SVF accounts in use at the end of Q3/2023 was up by 10.7 per cent, and the total float and SVF deposit was up by 9.0 per cent. The total number and value of SVF transactions during Q3/2023 were up by 3.7 per cent and 11.6 per cent respectively year-on-year.

Note 1: Before Q1/2022, SVF transactions data comprise point-of-sale spending payment, online spending payment and P2P funds transfer. Following the publication of "add value" transactions, transactions relating to certain receipts of online spending payment and P2P funds transfer that were previously counted under "online spending payment" or "P2P funds transfer" are now counted under "add value" to reflect the relevant nature of such transactions.

Note 2: "Total number of SVF accounts in use" refers to the total number of SVF accounts that can be used as at the end of the reporting period.

Note 3: The terms "float" and "SVF deposit" follow their definitions in the Payment Systems and Stored Value Facilities Ordinance.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, December 15, 2023 is 103.8 (down 0.3 against yesterday's index).