

LCQ18: Primary Chinese medicine services

Following is a question by Professor the Hon Chan Wing-kwong and a written reply by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, in the Legislative Council today (June 19):

Question:

Regarding the Chinese medicine (CM) services provided to members of the public by District Health Centres (DHCs) and DHC Expresses (DHCEs), will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective details about the provision of CM services by various DHCs and DHCEs in the past three years;
- (2) of the respective numbers of CM practitioners involved in and members of the public who have benefited from the CM services mentioned in (1);
- (3) of the details of the CM services (including the estimated number of members of the public to be benefited) that various DHCs and DHCEs plan to provide this year; and
- (4) whether it plans to further enhance the CM services provided by various DHCs and DHCEs in the future; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The consolidated reply to the respective parts of the question raised by Professor the Hon Chan Wing-kwong is as follows:

Multi-disciplinary care is one of the focuses in delivering primary healthcare services and management of chronic disease, Chinese Medicine (CM) plays an important role in primary healthcare. In line with the recommendations of the Primary Healthcare Blueprint (Blueprint), the Government will further develop a community-based, family-centric, coherent and comprehensive community healthcare system based on the service model of District Health Centers (DHC). In this regard, the Government actively promotes the enhancement of CM service elements in DHCs, including encouraging CM practitioners to join as part of the community network service providers.

Currently, DHCs (including DHC Expresses) provide members with stroke rehabilitation programme and management programmes on osteoarthritic knee pain and low back pain. The operators of DHCs will establish a service network with CM practitioners and healthcare professionals as well as formulate subsidy arrangements, whereby participants in the programmes can

receive personalised CM and other healthcare services on a co-payment basis. As at the first quarter of 2024, nearly 400 CM practitioners have been engaged by DHCs as network service providers. Members with stroke, osteoarthritic knee pain and low back pain may opt for these subsidised CM services which include acupuncture and acupressure treatment according to their needs. Network CM practitioners will also provide disease prevention, health maintenance and health education, including group activities on dietary therapy. The DHCs also actively collaborate with the Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres (CMCTRs), including promote or provide Tianjiu service in DHCs under collaborative model. In the past three years (as at March 31, 2024), DHCs have provided CM class activities or individualised healthcare services with an accumulative attendance of 5 700 approximately (provisional figures).

In fact, the resources in the CM sector in Hong Kong are mainly concentrated in the private sector. More than 90 per cent of CM practitioners practice in the private market, providing around 14 million attendances for CM outpatient services every year, which has established a strong service network at the community level. Through the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme (EHVS), the Government provides eligible Hong Kong elderly person with an annual voucher amount of \$2,000 to subsidise their use of private primary healthcare services provided by 14 categories of healthcare professions, including CM practitioners. In the past three years, the amount claimed by the elderly person for using CM services under the EHVS has increased year-on-year. In 2023, the amount claimed was nearly \$1,141 million, the second highest among the healthcare professions under the EHVS.

Furthermore, as regards Government-subsidised CM primary healthcare services, the 18 CMCTRs currently provide services for about 1.5 million attendances each year on average, of which the annual quota of Government-subsidised outpatient services has increased from about 600 000 to 800 000 since October 2023, representing a surge of over 30 per cent. The Hong Kong's first Chinese Medicine Hospital will also provide a series of Government-subsidised outpatient services when it commences operation by phases starting from the end of 2025.

The Government will continue to develop various primary healthcare services (including CM services) in accordance with the Blueprint to optimise the use of resources in both public and private CM sectors. Meanwhile, the involvement of the CM in the primary healthcare reference frameworks will be further explored by the Government with a view to unleashing the potential advantage of the CM in health management and facilitating cross-disciplinary collaboration in primary healthcare services. With a view to leveraging on the strengths and advantages of the CM, the Government will continue to explore directions and strategies for further strengthening CM primary healthcare services, such as enhancing the participation of private CM sector in subsidised services through strategic purchasing, exploring the formulation of appropriate service scope and models, enhancing cross-disciplinary collaboration, and promoting further synergies between primary healthcare services and CM services through development of relevant training, publicity and promotion, health assessment, preventive care and introduction

of new programmes with the involvement of the CM practitioners, in particular in the area of chronic disease prevention and health management.

In parallel, the Health Bureau is collaborating with the CM sector to formulate the CM Development Blueprint, in which a comprehensive review on the long-term strategies and planning for the development of the CM services will be conducted, including relevant areas such as the involvement of CM in primary healthcare and the mode of further collaboration with DHCs.

Joint operations conducted against improper use of bright light for fishing and illegal fishing activities (with photos)

The Marine Department (MD), together with the Hong Kong Police Force and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), conducted joint operations against the improper use of bright light for fishing and illegal fishing activities in the eastern and southern waters of Hong Kong on June 14 and 18.

During the operations, five vessels were inspected and among them four vessels were suspected to have used bright light improperly for fishing, while no vessel was found to be engaged in illegal fishing. The MD will further investigate the cases and gather evidence for prosecution in order to combat any relevant irregularities.

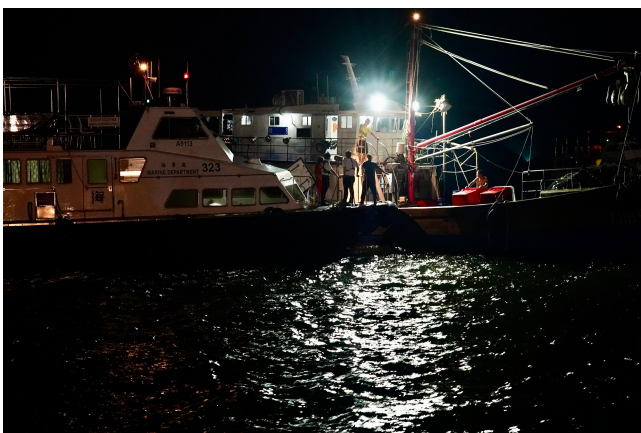
A spokesman for the MD reminded the public that under the Shipping and Port Control Regulations (Cap. 313A), vessels are allowed to use a bright light for fishing in areas where bright-light fishing is permitted. However, the use of a bright light on any vessel for the purpose of fishing, or attracting fish in Hong Kong waters, shall comply with the requirements of Cap. 313A and the Merchant Shipping (Local Vessels) (General) Regulation (Cap. 548F), i.e. a bright light shall be so constructed, shaded, installed and used so that no light emitted from it shall be visible, whether directly or by reflection from any source other than the sea surface, above a horizontal plane passing through the lowest edge of the light source. A person who contravenes the related legislation commits an offence and is liable to a fine of \$5,000 upon conviction.

In addition, under the Fisheries Protection Ordinance (Cap. 171), only a vessel registered under the Fisheries Protection Ordinance can be used for fishing in Hong Kong waters and only the fishing methods listed on its Certificate of Local Fishing Vessel Registration can be employed for fishing by the vessel. Any offender upon conviction is liable to a fine of \$100,000

and imprisonment for six months.

To ensure the order of marine traffic and navigation safety of vessels, in addition to daily patrols and enforcement actions in various districts of Hong Kong waters, the MD also maintains close co-operation with the Marine Police and the AFCD from time to time to conduct target-based joint operations, including inspections involving the suspected improper use of a bright light for fishing and illegal fishing activities. From January to May 2024, the MD conducted a total of 25 special operations in areas including the waters of southern Lantau Island, southern Lamma Island, south of Hong Kong and east of Hong Kong. Six prosecutions had been initiated against the fishing vessels in relation to illegal bright-light fishing. The MD is now taking follow-up actions.

The MD will continue to step up patrols to combat the improper use of bright light for fishing activities to ensure safe navigation. The department will also meet with local fishery organisations from time to time to distribute relevant publicity and education materials to the trade. Information on the proper use of bright light for fishing is available on the MD's website: www.mardep.gov.hk/filemanager/en/share/publications/pdf/materials/pu_blf.pdf.



Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, June 19, 2024 is 106.5 (same as yesterday's index).

SHYA visits Gansu Province to attend Public Fuxi Commemoration Ceremony

The Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, will depart for Tianshui City in Gansu Province tomorrow (June 20), to attend the Public Fuxi Commemoration Ceremony 2024 on behalf of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government.

Miss Mak will return to Hong Kong on June 21. During her absence, the Under Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Mr Clarence Leung, will act as the Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs.

LCQ2: Sites for hosting outdoor mega events

Following is a question by the Hon Benson Luk and a reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (June 19):

Question:

The Harbourfront Commission discussed earlier the proposed construction of a ventilation building measuring some 18 metres in height and occupying a footprint area of 55 metres by 40 metres for the MTR Airport Railway at the Central Harbourfront Event Space site. The relevant works are proposed to commence next year and last for seven years. There are views that the land occupied by the relevant project and its associated site works as well as the noise and dust generated from the works may create a continuous impact on the use of the Central harbourfront by various sectors for organising mega events, such as large-scale concerts, outdoor exhibitions, funfairs with amusement rides and art exhibitions, and the area and capacity of the mega

events site will be reduced as a direct consequence. Regarding sites for hosting outdoor mega events, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as it has been reported that the aforesaid works were first conceived at the time of the Central Reclamation project many years ago, of the reasons why the authorities have deferred the commencement of the works to next year; the increase in construction costs of the works over the original estimation, as well as the planning and progress of the works;

(2) whether it will, in the light of the adverse impact to be brought about by the aforesaid works on the mega events site at Central harbourfront, identify an alternative site suitable for carrying out the relevant works, or consider other modes and options to minimise the impact; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) of the number of additional outdoor mega events sites to be made available over the next five years for the purpose of promoting the mega event economy, as well as the respective areas of such sites and the respective numbers of seats to be provided?

Reply:

President,

The Central Harbourfront Event Space (CHES) is located to the north of Lung Wo Road in Central and has a site area of 3.7 hectares (ha). The Development Bureau (DEVB) has let the site to private organisations by way of short term tenancy since 2014 for operation. Various large-scale local and international cultural and recreational mega events have been hosted there, bringing diversified experiences to the residents and tourists alike and promoting the mega-event economy. As such, we share the concern of the Hon Benson Luk about the possible impact of the Airport Railway Extended Overrun Tunnel (AREOT) project on the CHES. The concerned project involves the construction of a tunnel of around 500 metres long beneath Lung Wo Road to the east of the Hong Kong Station, which will enable trains running on the Tung Chung Line and the Airport Express Line to turn around at the back of the Hong Kong Station, i.e. to the east of the station. Such arrangement will enable increase in train frequency, enhancing the train carrying capacities and operation efficiency so as to support the transport demand from the developments in Tung Chung, Siu Ho Wan and the airport.

Having consulted the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB) and the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, the replies to the various parts of the question are as follows:

Regarding part (1) of the question, the AREOT project is part of the Airport Railway project. The funding support for the AREOT project was already provided by the Government to the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (later renamed as the Mass Transit Railway Corporation Limited (MTRCL)) as part of the Airport Railway project. Since there had not yet been an imminent need for the said extended overrun tunnel at the time when the Airport Railway was constructed in the 1990s, the Government agreed then that the

timetable for its construction would be firmed up subject to the future patronage at a later juncture. In the light of the recent developments, to support the transport demand from the developments in Tung Chung, Siu Ho Wan and the airport, the MTRCL commenced the planning and preliminary design works in 2022.

Regarding part (2) of the question, in order for the said overrun tunnel to connect with the existing tracks of the Tung Chung Line and the Airport Express Line of the Hong Kong Station, it is necessary to construct the tunnel beneath Lung Wo Road to the east of the Hong Kong Station. To cope with ventilation and fire safety requirements, a ventilation cum emergency access building will need to be built aboveground as part of the project. Nonetheless, the DEVB, the TLB and the MTRCL have been in liaison with a view to minimising the impact of the construction of the tunnel on the CHES as far as practicable; and have been working together to proactively follow up the review of the project proposal after the project was discussed at the Harbourfront Commission last year.

The proposal is reviewed along the following directions: (1) to reduce the footprint and height of the ventilation cum emergency access building, as well as its location, for reducing the long-term impact of these permanent facilities to the CHES; (2) to reduce the aboveground works area needed during the construction of the tunnel, so that outdoor events such as open-air concerts that are popular these years can still be held at the CHES during the construction period; and (3) to reduce the inconvenience brought to the various types of events to be held at the CHES during the construction period, and to postpone the commencement of construction to after 2025, in order that the event organisers may consider using the Kai Tak Sports Park (KTSP) which would then be opened. The TLB and the MTRCL are working on the project proposal according to the above directions, with a view to minimising the impact and enabling the CHES to continuously deliver its function effectively.

Regarding part (3) of the question, the DEVB has let the 1.4-ha Wan Chai Harbourfront Event Space late last year for operation by the market. As for the Kowloon side, a number of outdoor event spaces have been opened in the West Kowloon Cultural District, including the Art Park and the Wonderland. The former contains a Great Lawn that can accommodate about 10 000 standing visitors to enjoy performances, and the latter is an outdoor performance venue that can accommodate about 8 000 spectators. The KTSP will be open in the first half of 2025, providing modern and multi-purpose sports and recreation facilities, including a 50 000-seat Main Stadium and an outdoor Public Sports Ground with a capacity of about 5 000 spectators, which are of great significance to the development of not only sports, but also the mega-event economy of Hong Kong. The aforesaid venues have not yet taken into account the new outdoor event venues at the SPORTS PARK Sai Sha and the adjacent GO PARK Sai Sha that will come into operation by phases in the near future by private enterprises.