

Three additional Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area service points in Shenzhen to launch on August 14 (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (August 5) signed service agreements with five medical institutions under the Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme (Pilot Scheme). All medical institutions participating in the Pilot Scheme have completed the signing of service agreements by now. Meanwhile, the DH announced that three of the integrated services/dental services institutions located in Shenzhen will launch the Elderly Health Care Voucher (EHCV) Scheme on August 14. By then, the number of service points in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) where eligible elderly persons can use the EHCVs will be significantly increased to seven, marking a major step forward in medical co-operation in the GBA.

"The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address" put forward the Pilot Scheme initiative to extend the coverage of the EHCVs to suitable medical institutions in the GBA in 2024. The Pilot Scheme covers a total of seven medical institutions, among which the First Affiliated Hospital, Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou (FAH-SYSU) and Zhongshan Chen Xinghai Hospital of Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine (ZSCXH) located in Zhongshan launched the service on June 28 and July 18 respectively, allowing eligible Hong Kong elderly persons to use the EHCVs for outpatient healthcare services at the service points. Witnessed by the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, today signed the service agreements with representatives of the five remaining medical institutions for the full implementation of the Pilot Scheme this year. The five medical institutions are:

Integrated services hospitals (all with dental services)

- * Nansha Division of the First Affiliated Hospital, Sun Yat-sen University in Nansha (FAH-NS)
- * Dongguan Tungwah Hospital in Dongguan (Tungwah Hospital)
- * Shenzhen New Frontier United Family Hospital in Shenzhen (NFUFH)

Dental services hospital/clinic

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

Following the signing of agreements and successful implementation of the projects, EHCVs will be allowed to be used at NFUFH, C.K.J Hospital and Dental Bauhinia in Shenzhen starting from August 14. Together with the two

service points operated by the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen (HKU-SZ) Hospital at its hospital and the Huawei Li Zhi Yuan Community Health Service Center (CHC), as well as the FAH-SYSU and ZSCXH under the Pilot Scheme, eligible Hong Kong elderly persons can use the EHCVs for outpatient healthcare services at seven GBA service points. This offers more convenience and flexibility for eligible Hong Kong elderly persons residing in Mainland cities in the GBA by providing more service points for them to better use their EHCVs on primary healthcare services for improving their health.

A DH spokesman said, "The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government thanks the Health Commission of Guangdong Province and the Shenzhen Municipal Health Commission for their valuable comments and assistance in taking forward the Pilot Scheme. C.K.J Hospital and Dental Bauhinia are both professional dental service institutions located near the Lo Wu and Futian Control Points respectively. This first participation of professional dental service institutions under the Pilot Scheme marks a major breakthrough in the implementation of the EHCV Scheme on the Mainland, allowing more choices for eligible Hong Kong elderly persons to receive dental services in Shenzhen with their EHCVs, with a view to addressing the pressing demand of Hong Kong elderly persons in seeking dental services. Following the launch of the three new service points including NFUFH, together with the current HKU-SZ Hospital and Huawei Li Zhi Yuan CHC that also provide dental services, a total of five service points providing dental services will be available in Shenzhen alone, with two being professional dental service institutions."

EHCVs are applicable for outpatient healthcare services provided by nine designated departments at NFUFH, including Family Medicine, Health Management, Dental, Ophthalmology, Surgery, Orthopaedics, Internal Medicine, Gynaecology and ENT (Ear, Nose, Throat), as well as the outpatient dental care services provided by C.K.J Hospital and Dental Bauhinia. More details and the relevant treatment flow are set out in the Annex.

Moreover, the arrangements for shared use of EHCVs between spouses and the EHCV Pilot Reward Scheme under the EHCV Scheme are equally applicable to the abovementioned three medical institutions in Shenzhen. Elderly persons receiving designated primary healthcare outpatient services for health checks, and preventive and follow-up/monitoring of long-term conditions provided by the nine designated departments at the NFUFH, or those receiving designated dental outpatient services provided by C.K.J Hospital and Dental Bauhinia, such as dental check-ups, scaling, extraction or filling, can accumulate EHCV spending and be allotted rewards.

The fees for the healthcare services provided by the three medical institutions in Shenzhen are denominated in Renminbi. They will make EHCV claims for elderly persons, and the EHCV amount deducted in Hong Kong dollars will be calculated according to a monthly updated voucher conversion factor under the EHCV Scheme. The monthly voucher conversion factor will be displayed at the cashier offices for the elderly's reference.

The spokesman reminded, "Hong Kong elderly persons using EHCVs at any designated medical institution in the GBA should have registered with

eHealth. In other words, the relevant arrangements not only apply to the HKU-SZ Hospital, Huawei Li Zhi Yuan CHC, the FAH-SYSU, ZSCXH, the NFUFH, C.K.J Hospital, and Dental Bauhinia, but also the remaining two medical institutions that will launch relevant arrangements under the Pilot Scheme in the future. After joining eHealth, elderly persons can use the mobile app to check their EHCV balance and usage record, as well as access at any time important information such as their medications, allergies and adverse drug reactions stored in the eHealth app. If elderly persons wish to use EHCVs at the GBA medical institutions but they have not yet registered with eHealth, the medical institutions will immediately register them for eHealth upon their consent so that they can use EHCVs right away.

"In addition, elderly persons cannot use EHCVs together with national medical insurance to pay for the fees of the same healthcare service encounter. The scope of using EHCVs on the Mainland is the same as that in Hong Kong, which does not include inpatient services, prepaid healthcare services and day surgery procedures. EHCVs cannot be used solely for the purchase of goods, medication, medical equipment or products, nor can they be redeemed for cash."

The Government included seven GBA medical institutions in the Pilot Scheme in February this year and is carrying out preparatory work for launching the use of EHCVs with the last two medical institutions under the Pilot Scheme, i.e. FAH-NS and Tungwah Hospital. It is expected that the two medical institutions will launch relevant arrangements in early September, and the details will be announced in due course.

Launched in 2009, the EHCV Scheme currently subsidises eligible Hong Kong elderly persons aged 65 and above with an annual EHCV amount of \$2,000 (with the accumulation limit set at \$8,000) for them to choose private primary healthcare services that best suit their health needs. Members of the public may browse the EHCV Scheme website (www.hcv.gov.hk) or call the EHCV Scheme hotline (2838 2311) for information on the EHCV Scheme.

