

DoH congratulates Dr Cecilia Fan on receiving National Outstanding Individuals in the Foreign Medical Aid commendation by National Health Commission (with photos)

The Department of Health (DH)'s Consultant (Family Medicine) Dr Cecilia Fan today (December 29) received the National Outstanding Individuals in the Foreign Medical Aid commendation by the National Health Commission in Beijing, which recognises the contribution and participation of Dr Fan and the DH team as part of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) search and rescue team to support frontline rescue members to save lives in the earthquake-stricken areas of Türkiye early this year. The Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, expressed his heartfelt congratulations to Dr Fan and the DH team, and hailed her and the teammates as the pride of the department and role models for colleagues.

Speaking after the award presentation, Dr Fan said that she is very grateful for the country's commendation and it is the greatest pride for her. She also felt honoured to be trusted and nominated by the HKSAR Government and the department. She added that the search and rescue team only got hold of limited information before departure and she needed to prepare suitable medicines, first-aid supplies, emergency medical devices and medical outreach equipment within a short period of time. Therefore, the commendation does not belong to her personally, as it took the co-operation of the whole team for the pre-departure preparation to be completed swiftly and efficiently. She thanked again the three colleagues of the DH medical team for working alongside her in the rescue operation and other colleagues of the DH for their strong support behind the scenes. She has learnt a lot from members of the search and rescue team from other departments who demonstrated professionalism and team spirit at all times. The experience enriched her career and she promised to treasure the honour by passing on the relevant experience.

Dr Lam said, "Despite the extreme adverse and dangerous environment, Dr Fan and her team demonstrated bravery and professionalism when taking care of the health of the search and rescue team members around the clock. The department is honoured that Dr Fan and her team's effort has been recognised by the country. The search and rescue team's effort and contribution are not only highly praised by the Türkiye Government and their citizens, but they were also commended locally by being awarded the first Chief Executive's Award for Exemplary Performance and the Chief Executive's Commendation for Government/Public Service. Their selfless dedication has also gained support from Hong Kong people. They are the pride of the HKSAR."

Dr Lam pointed out that the participation in the rescue operation showcased DH colleagues' spirit of serving people with professionalism and dedication, which will set a good example and influence and inspire more people. It is commendable that Dr Fan and her team overcame difficulties and danger and worked as a team to accomplish the mission with a passion to save lives and their professionalism. Dr Lam also extended his appreciation to colleagues of the Port Health Division, the Health Administration and Planning Office and the Departmental Administration Division of the DH, who formed an emergency back-up team for the frontline medical team to render round-the-clock support and provide necessary supplies.

The DH sent a four-person medical team to join the 59-strong search and rescue team deployed by the HKSAR Government this February to assist the search and rescue work at the quake-stricken areas in Türkiye. The medical team safeguarded the physical and mental health of the search and rescue team members during the operation. Before departure, the Port Health Division of the DH arranged vaccination for all the search and rescue team members. The medical team comprises two family medicine specialists and two public health nursing officers. Led by Dr Fan, the medical team prepared sufficient medicine, disinfection and first-aid supplies, and implemented the infection control measures to prevent outbreak of infectious diseases and hypothermia among search and rescue team members. The medical team also provided 24-hour medical support to members ensuring that they were in their best condition to carry out the rescue duties. The search and rescue team successfully rescued four survivors from the quake-stricken areas at the end.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the dispatch of the Mainland foreign aid medical teams, and the 10th anniversary of the promulgation of the Chinese medical team spirit. The spirit of international humanitarianism has been demonstrated by generations of foreign aid medical teams, with their outstanding medical skills and high standard of moral values. They are dedicated to serving the people in need and enhancing the healthcare development and health levels in recipient countries. The Mainland's international medical aid team executes the noble spirit – no fear of hardships, willingness to dedicate, saving lives and great love with practical actions – and jointly builds a shared human health community.

