

## Gerontech and Innovation Expo cum Summit 2018 opens (with photos)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung; the Chairperson of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, Mr Bernard Chan; and the Chief Executive Officer of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, Mr Albert Wong, officiated at the Opening Ceremony of the Gerontech and Innovation Expo cum Summit (GIES) 2018 today (November 22) together with representatives from its major sponsors.

Technology is integral to our daily lives, no matter in social welfare, healthcare or other areas, and the application of gerontechnology is increasingly seen as a key strategy to help fulfil the needs of an ageing population. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government hopes to raise public awareness on the application of gerontechnology. Showcasing local and overseas innovative technology products and concepts, the GIES provides a collaborative platform for stakeholders to enhance quality of life for the elderly through the application of innovative technology.

Addressing the ceremony, Mr Cheung said that the HKSAR Government attaches great importance to the well-being of its elderly citizens. The Government's recurrent spending on the elderly, including social welfare payments, medical services and other support, amounts to 20 per cent (or \$86 billion) of total government expenditure. With a view to providing quality and cost-effective long-term care services for the elderly, the Government is delivering a series of elderly initiatives following the policy objective of promoting "ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up". The Government anticipates that through the application of innovative technology to support the elderly to live independently and securely at home and to strengthen their social connections, the quality of life of the elderly can be enhanced, while at the same time the burden and pressure on care staff and carers can be relieved. To achieve this, the Government has been promoting research and development of technologies in the elderly service sector through a number of funding programmes under the Innovation and Technology Fund.

Mr Cheung took the opportunity to formally announce at the opening ceremony that the \$1 billion Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care would be open for applications from December 3. All non-governmental and private organisations currently receiving subsidies from the Social Welfare Department and providing subsidised residential care services for the elderly or persons with disabilities, community care and support services for the elderly, or day rehabilitation and community support services, will be eligible to apply for the Fund to procure or rent technology products, or try out newly developed technology products. It is estimated that over 1 260 service units could benefit.

After the opening ceremony, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong; and the Founder and Partner of Copenhagen Living Lab in Denmark, Mr Thomas Hammer-Jakobsen, delivered keynote speeches to review policies supporting the application of innovation and technology in local elderly and rehabilitation care, and to outline the roles of different stakeholders in the emergence of gerontechnology, respectively.

The GIES 2018 is open to the public free of charge. Those who are interested may visit the event's website ([gies.hk/en](http://gies.hk/en)) for more information.

