

Government to extend Pilot Scheme for Supporting Patients of Hospital Authority in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

The Health Bureau announced today (March 31) the extension of the Pilot Scheme for Supporting Patients of the Hospital Authority in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Pilot Scheme) for one year till March 31 next year, with a view to enabling eligible patients of the Hospital Authority (HA) to choose to receive subsidised consultation services at the designated collaborating healthcare institution in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). The Scheme aims to provide Hong Kong people with more choices when receiving HA's services, and is currently applicable to the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital (HKU-SZH). The Government and the HA will evaluate the effectiveness and scope of services of the Pilot Scheme each year and make necessary adjustments in a timely manner.

From May 10, 2023 until the end February this year, a total of 5 100 eligible patients have participated in the Pilot Scheme, with over 60 per cent being elderly aged 65 or above. According to a patient survey conducted by the HKU-SZH in the end of last year, about 90 per cent of the respondents found its services satisfactory.

To provide more targeted healthcare support to patients, the Pilot Scheme will be enhanced. With effect from tomorrow (April 1), for eligible patients participating in the Pilot Scheme to utilise the subsidy under the Pilot Scheme, they are required to attend consultations at the service departments of the HKU-SZH that correspond with the HA's out-patient service categories for which they have follow-up appointments.

Moreover, building on the Pilot Scheme and targeting at specific HA services, the Government is exploring the introduction of more healthcare choices of receiving services in the GBA for patients with follow-up appointments in the HA. Relevant measures will be rolled out once ready.

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, said, "The Government has long been taking forward collaborations on medical and health aspects in the GBA in accordance with the principles of complementarity and mutual benefits. The HA will continue to explore more in-depth healthcare collaborations with suitable organisations and enhance the efficiency of public healthcare services with a view to shortening patients' waiting time."

Apart from the above enhancement measure, other arrangements of the Pilot Scheme upon extension will remain largely the same as those at present. Eligible patients will be required to pay on their own a consultation fee of RMB100 for each consultation received at the designated out-patient clinic of the HKU-SZH (except for specified persons whose medical fees would be waived

upon verification by the HA). Such consultation fee payable by eligible patients will be adjusted on January 1 next year in accordance with the specialist out-patient consultation fee as set under the fees and charges reform for public healthcare. The Government will announce the details in due course. The remaining consultation fee will be subsidised by the Pilot Scheme, subject to a cap of RMB2,000. The validity period of the relevant subsidy is from tomorrow to March 31 next year.

Meanwhile, the scope of subsidised consultation services under the Pilot Scheme will continue to cover out-patient services provided by the HA, namely anaesthesiology (pain clinic only); cardiothoracic surgery; clinical oncology; ear, nose and throat; eye; gynaecology; internal medicine; neurosurgery; obstetrics; orthopaedics and traumatology (orthopaedics); paediatrics; surgery; and general out-patient services. Episodic illnesses, inpatient or day inpatient, as well as Accident and Emergency services are not included under the scope of subsidised consultation services. Eligible patients are required to attend at the service departments of the HKU-SZH that correspond with the HA's out-patient service categories for which they have medical follow-up to receive subsidised consultation services.

The subsidy for existing patients under the Pilot Scheme will expire today. Eligible patients who wish to continue participating in the Pilot Scheme may make appointments through the existing channels whereby the HKU-SZH will make appointments at the departments that correspond with the HA's out-patient service categories for which they have follow-up appointments. They should also complete the declaration to confirm continued participation at the HKU-SZH before receiving any subsidised consultation services. For patients who wish to cease participation in the Pilot Scheme and return to Hong Kong for follow-up consultations at the out-patient clinics of the HA, they may approach the HKU-SZH and the hospital will make referral for them to arrange follow-up appointments at the corresponding out-patient clinics of the HA according to their clinical needs.

As for eligible patients who have not participated in the Pilot Scheme before or those who have joined the Scheme but need to have their personal information updated, they may submit their application to the HKU-SZH from tomorrow onwards.

Details will be uploaded to the websites of the HA and the HKU-SZH later for public reference. For enquiries, citizens may also call the HA (Tel. No.: 2300 7070; Service Hours: 9am – 6pm, Mondays to Fridays, except public holidays) or the HKU-SZH (Tel. No.: (+86) 0755-86913101; Service Hours: 8am – 12.30pm and 2pm – 5.30pm, Mondays to Fridays, except public holidays).