

Hospital Authority expands the Integrated Chinese-Western Medicine services to 53 hospital sites

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) announced today (March 14) that the Integrated Chinese-Western Medicine (ICWM) services have been further expanded to 26 public hospitals under the seven clusters in the first quarter of 2024 and adding up the hospital sites from eight to 53 (at the Annex). Such expansion is in line with the policy direction set forth in the Policy Address that to promote long-term development of Chinese medicine (CM) and enhance ICWM services in providing services to patients under the designated disease areas (including stroke care, musculoskeletal pain management, cancer palliative care and cancer care pilot programme).

The Chief Manager (Chinese Medicine) of the HA, Ms Rowena Wong, stated, "Since 2014, the HA has been implementing the ICWM pilot programme by phases with a view to gather relevant operational experience. With the staunch support of the Government, the ICWM services have gained substantial results and reaching its periodical milestone. The ICWM services have been regularised since early last year and further extended to cover more hospital sites and disease areas, offering patients additional treatment options for leveraging the advantages of CM and ICWM. The HA will continue to explore the feasibility of extending the ICWM services to cover more disease areas, such as elderly degenerative diseases and respiratory diseases, which would benefit to a greater number of patients."

The Chief of Service of the Department of Medicine of Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Dr Fong Wing-chi, said, "Stroke patients face many challenges on their treatment and recovery journey. The Western medicine medical team welcomes the participation of CM practitioners in jointly assessing and providing treatment for the patients, believing that such arrangement will offer help to suitable patients participating in the programme. Western medicine and CM experts collaborate in formulating clinical treatment plans and have regular case discussions. With close collaboration, both medical teams will have more experiences in ICWM consultations. With the experience accumulated, it certainly will benefit the future development of the ICWM services in terms of its application and coverage of disease areas."

The Senior CM practitioner at the Pok Oi Hospital-Hong Kong Baptist University Chinese Medicine Clinic cum Training and Research Centre (Yau Tsim Mong District), Mr Yau Kin-chung, said that traditional CM services in Hong Kong have primarily been outpatient-based. The ICWM model developed by the HA provides opportunities for authorised participating CM practitioners to review patients' clinical data and reports. Such arrangement helps the CM practitioners obtain a comprehensive understanding of the patients'

conditions in which facilitating their formulation of the clinical treatment plans. Joint management of patients by the two medical teams under ICWM services can also promote multi-disciplinary knowledge exchanges and drive the service development, enabling patients to receive more comprehensive treatment and care.

The ICWM services target eligible individuals aged 18 and above, who have been assessed by both the Western Medicine and CM teams at designated public hospital sites and considered suitable with fulfilling the programme criteria. Participation is voluntary, and the participation does not affect patients' original treatment plans at the hospitals. With the funding support by the Government, patients receiving this service only need to pay a fee of \$120 for each attendance of ICWM inpatient services (not including general fees for public hospital services), while Comprehensive Social Security Assistance recipients will be fully waived for the service fees under the programme.

The HA expresses gratitude to the Government for the steadfast support on the development of ICWM services, and will dedicatedly develop an evidence-based and sustainable ICWM model in Hong Kong. In future, the HA will make effort to explore opportunities for further development of ICWM, leveraging the professional advantages of both sides to enhance treatment effectiveness so as to provide patients with more appropriate medical services. The HA will continue to devote its efforts in aligning with the national policy initiatives in promoting the high-quality development of CM in Hong Kong on all fronts with an aim to achieve the internationalisation of ICWM experience.