

LCQ14: Pilot Scheme on Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinics

Following is a question by Professor the Hon Chan Wing-kwong and a written reply by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mrs Ingrid Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (January 22):

Question:

The Civil Service Bureau launched the Pilot Scheme on Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinics (the Scheme) on March 2, 2020 to provide free Chinese medicine services for treatment purpose for civil service eligible persons. The Scheme was regularised in October 2021. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) of the respective (i) attendances of civil servants and (ii) total attendances at each of the Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinics (CSCMCs) located in Eastern District, Tsuen Wan and North District each year since the launch of the Scheme;
- (2) of the approximate daily service disc quota that can be provided to civil servants by the aforesaid three CSCMCs, as well as the respective waiting time of civil servants seeking consultations and follow-up consultations for episodic diseases;
- (3) of the feedback from civil servants on the services provided by the aforesaid three CSCMCs; and
- (4) whether it has plans to extend the Scheme to more Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres or launch outreach services, so as to facilitate civil servants in seeking consultation and enhance their medical benefits?

Reply:

President,

The Government launched in March 2020 the Pilot Scheme on Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinics (the Pilot Scheme), under which Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinics (CSCMCs) were set up within the two Chinese Medicine Clinic cum Training and Research Centres (CMCTRs) in Eastern District and Tsuen Wan District to provide free Chinese medicine (CM) general consultation and acupuncture services to civil service eligible persons (CSEPs) for treatment purpose. The Pilot Scheme was regularised in October 2021, and a third CSCMC in North District also commenced services in March 2023 subsequently.

The reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

- (1) The annual attendance at CSCMCs increased from around 60 000 in 2020-21

to around 100 000 in 2023-24, representing an increase of over 60 per cent. The annual attendance of each CSCMC and the total attendance are at Annex. We do not maintain breakdown by category of attending CSEPs (serving civil servants, retired civil servants or eligible dependents).

(2) The number of service quotas provided by the three CSCMCs on each working day is about 360 in total. CSEPs in need of CM services can make same-day or next working day appointments within office hours through telephone or mobile application on a first-come, first-served basis. Upon the recommendation of the attending CM practitioner and under the condition that there are available appointment slots, follow-up appointments could be arranged for patients within 30 days of consultation. In allocating the service quotas, the three CSCMCs do not adopt a system where patients need to queue.

(3) Civil service CM services have been well-received by CSEPs since launch, with an average utilisation rate of over 95 per cent. In addition to conducting a review and regularising the services one year after the launch of the Pilot Scheme, the Civil Service Bureau has been collecting CSEPs' views on civil service CM services from time to time through the four central staff consultative councils and the Standing Committee on Medical and Dental Facilities for Civil Servants. In general, CSEPs have given very positive feedback towards the services of CSCMCs. In view of the high service demand, they look forward to an increase in service quotas.

(4) In response to the requests from the staff side, we have increased the annual service quotas of the CSCMCs by 2 000 from November 2024 and will increase by a further 3 000 from 2025-26, totalling an increase of 5 000. The additional service quotas are evenly allocated to the three CSCMCs on the whole.

Medical benefits for civil servants have all along been provided through the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority (HA). The CSCMCs are currently located within three existing CMCTRs, which are operating under a tripartite collaboration model involving the HA, non-governmental organisations and local universities. We will focus resources to continue providing services via CSCMCs within CMCTRs, and have no plan to introduce outreaching services for the time being. In the longer run, we will set up more CSCMCs by reprovisioning or redeveloping some of the CMCTRs. We are also in discussion with the Health Bureau on the provision of CM services for CSEPs at The Chinese Medicine Hospital of Hong Kong after its commissioning.