

## **LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES**

### **Support for Elderly Persons who are in Need of Dental Care**

#### **PURPOSE**

This paper sets out the Government's dental care policy and dental care support for the elderly.

#### **DENTAL CARE POLICY**

2. The Government's policy on oral health and dental care seeks to raise public awareness of oral hygiene and oral health and encourage proper oral health habits through allocating resources primarily to promotion, education and preventive efforts. To enhance the oral health of the public, the Oral Health Education Unit of the Department of Health (DH) has, over the years, implemented oral health promotion programmes targeted at different age groups and disseminated oral health information through different channels. The DH also organises the annual Love Teeth Campaign to help the public to develop proper tooth cleaning concept and method. Information on oral health is also available to the public at all times through the oral health education homepage ([www.toothclub.gov.hk](http://www.toothclub.gov.hk)) and 24-hour oral health information hotline (2713 6344).

3. For people with acute dental problems, the Government provides free emergency dental services treatments through designated sessions in 11 government dental clinics of DH (generally referred to as "General Public Sessions" (GP Sessions)). Emergency dental services at GP Sessions cover treatment of acute dental diseases, prescription for pain relief, treatment of oral abscess and teeth extraction. The dentists also give professional advice with regard to the individual needs of patients. Please refer to **Annex A** for the list of government dental clinics with GP Sessions. In addition, specialist oral maxillofacial surgery and dental treatment are provided by DH's Oral Maxillofacial Surgery & Dental Units (OMS&DUs) in seven public hospitals for the referred hospital in-patients, patients with special oral health care needs and dental emergency. Such specialist services are provided through

referral by the Hospital Authority (HA) or private practitioners. OMS&DU will arrange appointments for patients according to the urgency of their conditions. Those with emergency needs, such as cases of dental trauma, will be provided with immediate consultation and treatment. Please find the list of OMS&DUs in **Annex B**.

4. Curative dental care services, such as scaling and polishing and fillings, are provided mainly by the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Hong Kong.

## **DENTAL CARE SUPPORT FOR THE ELDERLY**

5. For the elderly with financial difficulties, the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme provides a dental grant for its recipients who are aged 60 or above, disabled or medically certified to be in ill-health to cover the actual expenses or the ceiling amount of the dental treatments items (including dentures, crowns, bridges, scaling, fillings, root canal treatment and extraction). Eligible CSSA recipients can approach the 61 dental clinics designated by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) for dental examination and cost estimation. They may then choose to obtain the relevant dental treatments from any registered dentists in Hong Kong, including those of the SWD designated dental clinics. The amount of grant payable will be based on the exact fee charged by the clinic, the cost estimated by the designated clinic or the ceiling amount set by the SWD, whichever is the less.

6. In recent years, the Government has launched a series of initiatives to provide financial support for the elderly to receive dental care and oral hygiene services.

### *(a) Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme*

7. In 2009, the Government launched the Elderly Health Care Voucher Pilot Scheme to provide financial subsidies for elders aged 70 or above to use primary care services in the private sector, including dental services. As at end-May 2014, more than 470 dentists enrolled in the Scheme. The Scheme has been converted from a pilot project into a regular programme since January 2014, and the annual voucher amount has been doubled to \$2,000 since early June 2014.

*(b) Outreach Pilot Project*

8. In 2011, we launched the three-year Pilot Project on Outreach Primary Dental Care Services for the Elderly in Residential Care Homes (RCHEs) and Day Care Centres (DEs) (Outreach Pilot Project) in collaboration with participating NGOs. These elders are generally physically weak with frail conditions, hence making it difficult for them to receive dental care services at dental clinics. As at end-May 2014, outreach dental teams set up by the NGOs have provided basic dental care services to about 65 000 elders in more than 750 RCHEs and DEs.

9. Having regard to the experience gained and positive feedback from the NGOs, we will turn the Outreach Pilot Project into a regular programme, namely Outreach Dental Care Programme for the Elderly, in October 2014 to continue to provide outreach dental services for elders in similar health conditions and physical environment. We will introduce the following enhancements to the dental outreach services-

- (a) increasing the block grant for each outreach dental team in the light of price increases in the past few years. This also helps the NGOs recruit more experienced dentists to undertake outreach dental work;
- (b) expanding the scope of treatments and services to cover fillings, extractions, dentures, etc.; and
- (c) strengthening the funding and logistical support for arranging escort services for elders to receive follow-up treatment at NGOs' clinics where necessary.

10. In addition, we will expand the pool of beneficiaries to cover elders in similar conditions, including those residing in infirmary units under the HA and nursing homes registered with the DH. We will also strengthen the publicity to encourage more RCHEs / DEs to join the programme and enhance the awareness of eligible elders and their families about the outreach services available. The DH will develop a kit to enhance the capabilities of caregivers of RCHEs and DEs in attending to the daily oral care needs of these elders.

*(c) Community Care Fund Elderly Dental Assistance Programme*

11. In 2012, the Community Care Fund (CCF) has set aside \$100 million for launching an “Elderly Dental Assistance Programme” (the Programme) to provide eligible elders, who are users of the two home care service schemes subvented by the SWD (i.e. those with economic difficulties but not covered by CSSA nor residing in RCHes) with free dentures and related dental services. The Programme was launched in September 2012 and has appointed the Hong Kong Dental Association (HKDA) as the implementing agent. With the support of the HKDA, about 320 private dentists and NGO dental clinics have joined the Programme. As at end-May 2014, about 1 100 elders had been referred<sup>1</sup> to participating dentists / dental clinics, of whom around 900 have had their treatments completed.

12. Having regard to the initial response of the Programme, the CCF has introduced the following enhancements in the past year:-

- (a) Eligibility Criterion – At the commencement of the Programme, beneficiaries must be using the two home care service schemes subvented by the SWD as at 31 December 2011. Subsequently, the CCF extended the cut-off date twice from 31 December 2011 to 31 December 2013. Recently, the CCF has also included users of the “Home Help Service” under the Programme.
- (b) Fees to NGOs – Some NGOs have indicated difficulty in arranging referral of eligible elders to participating dentists due to manpower shortage. The CCF has provided additional fees to NGOs since June 2013 for providing escort services (\$70 per hour).
- (c) Fees to Dentists – To attract more private dentists to join, the CCF has revised the dental fees to align with those of the CSSA dental grant.

13. The CCF has been integrated into the work of the Commission on Poverty (CoP). Under the CoP, the CCF Task Force will continue to monitor the progress of the Programme and consider expanding the target beneficiaries of the Programme to persons who have financial difficulties and do not receive CSSA, for example, elderly persons who are Old Age Living Allowance recipients, taking into account the progress of the implementation and the experience gained.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the Programme, the NGOs which operate the home care services will approach eligible elders and refer them to receive dental services from participating dentists/dental clinics.

## **MANPOWER SITUATION**

14. According to the Dentists Registration Ordinance (DRO) (Cap. 156), any person practising dentistry within Hong Kong must be a registered dentist. To qualify for registration under the DRO, a person must either be a dental graduate of the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) or pass the Licensing Examination of the Dental Council of Hong Kong. At present, around 1 700 active registered dentists work in the private sector and dental clinics operated by the NGOs. The number of new dentists trained locally is about 50 each year.

15. As part of our on-going efforts to reform the healthcare system, a high-level steering committee was established in 2012 to conduct a strategic review on healthcare manpower planning and professional development in Hong Kong. Chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health, the steering committee is tasked to formulate recommendations on how to cope with anticipated demand for healthcare manpower, strengthen professional training and facilitate professional development, with a view to ensuring the healthy and sustainable development of our healthcare system. To assist the steering committee in making informed recommendations, we have commissioned the HKU to conduct a comprehensive manpower projection for the 13 healthcare professions which are subject to statutory regulation, including dentists. We are also considering ways to facilitate dental graduates from overseas universities, especially those who are residents of Hong Kong, to attend the Licensing Examination, in collaboration with the HKU Faculty of Dentistry.

## **ADVICE SOUGHT**

16. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

**Food and Health Bureau  
Department of Health  
June 2014**

**Department of Health 衛生署**  
**Dental Clinics with General Public Session (For emergency dental service - limited to pain relief & extraction)**  
**牙科街症服務診所 (只提供緊急牙科服務 - 限於止痛及脫牙)**

**Hong Kong 香港**

Clinic 診所	Address 地址	Tel 電話	Operation Hours 服務時間	
Kennedy Town Community Complex Dental Clinic 堅尼地城社區綜合大樓 牙科診所	10/F, Kennedy Town Community Complex 12 Rock Hill Street, Kennedy Town Hong Kong 香港堅尼地城石山街 12 號 堅尼地城社區綜合大樓 10 樓	3583 3460	Monday & Friday 星期一、五	AM 上午

**Kowloon 九龍**

Clinic 診所	Address 地址	Tel 電話	Operation Hours 服務時間	
Kowloon City Dental Clinic 九龍城牙科診所	3/F, Kowloon City Health Centre Kowloon City Government Offices 42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom, Kowloon 九龍紅磡庇利街 42 號 九龍城政府合署九龍城健康中心 3 字樓	2768 9721	Monday & Thursday 星期一、四	AM 上午
Kwun Tong Jockey Club Dental Clinic 觀塘賽馬會牙科診所	1/F, Kwun Tong Jockey Club Health Centre, 457 Kwun Tong Road, Kowloon 九龍觀塘道 457 號 觀塘賽馬會健康中心 1 樓	2345 4787	Wednesday 星期三	AM 上午

**New Territories & Islands 新界及離島**

Clinic 診所	Address 地址	Tel 電話	Operation Hours 服務時間	
Tai Oi Dental Clinic 大澳牙科診所	Tai O Jockey Club Clinic 103 Shek Tsai Po Street, Tai O 大澳石仔埗街 103 號大澳賽馬會診所	2985 7657	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the Month 每月第二個 星期四	AM 上午
Cheung Chau Dental Clinic 長洲牙科診所	2/F, St. John's Hospital Tung Wan Road, Cheung Chau 長洲東灣道長洲醫院 3 樓	2981 9441 Ext. 31	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday of the month 每月第一個 星期五	AM 上午
Mona Fong Dental Clinic 方逸華牙科診所	1/F, Mona Fong Clinic 23 Man Nin Street, Sai Kung 西貢萬年街 23 號方逸華診所 1 字樓	2163 9250	Thursday 星期四	PM 下午
Tai Po Wong Siu Ching Dental Clinic 大埔王少清牙科診所	1 Po Wu Road, Tai Po 大埔寶湖道 1 號	2652 3737	Thursday 星期四	AM 上午
Fanling Health Centre Dental Clinic 粉嶺健康中心牙科診所	3/F, Fanling Health Centre 2 Pik Fung Road, Fanling 粉嶺壁峰路 2 號粉嶺健康中心 3 字樓	2671 2046	Tuesday 星期二	AM 上午
Tsuen Wan Dental Clinic 荃灣牙科診所	213 Sha Tsui Road, Tsuen Wan 荃灣沙咀道 213 號	2492 0880	Tuesday & Friday 星期二、五	AM 上午
Yan Oi Dental Clinic 仁愛牙科診所	2/F, Yan Oi Polyclinic 6 Tuen Lee Street, Tuen Mun 屯門屯利街 6 號仁愛分科診所 2 樓	2452 3265	Wednesday 星期三	AM 上午
Yuen Long Jockey Club Dental Clinic 元朗賽馬會牙科診所	269 Castle Peak Road, Yuen Long 元朗青山公路 269 號	2477 1808	Tuesday & Friday 星期二、五	AM 上午

Note: Please queue up at the clinic to obtain a disc. No more disc will be distributed when quota is full. 注意: 名額有限, 請往診所排隊取籌, 額滿即止。

**List of Hospital Dental Units in Public Hospitals**

## 公立醫院口腔頤面外科及牙科部名單

<b><u>Name &amp; Address</u></b>	<b><u>名稱及地址</u></b>
<p>Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital Oral Maxillofacial Surgery &amp; Dental Unit 1/F, Main Block, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital 3 Lok Man Road, Chai Wan, Hong Kong.</p> <p>Tel : 2595 6291                      Fax No.: 2889 5813</p>	<p>東區尤德夫人那打素醫院口腔頤面外科及牙科部 香港柴灣樂民道 3 號東區醫院主座大樓 1 字樓</p>
<p>Queen Mary Hospital Oral Maxillofacial Surgery &amp; Dental Unit 1/F, Block A, Queen Mary Hospital 102 Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong.</p> <p>Tel : 2255 5425                      Fax No.: 2818 3645</p>	<p>瑪麗醫院口腔頤面外科及牙科部 香港薄扶林道 102 號瑪麗醫院 A 座 1 樓</p>
<p>Queen Elizabeth Hospital Oral Maxillofacial Surgery &amp; Dental Unit 7/F, Block F, Queen Elizabeth Hospital 30 Gascoigne Road, Kowloon</p> <p>Tel : 2958 6030                      Fax No.: 2771 9686</p>	<p>伊利沙伯醫院口腔頤面外科及牙科部 九龍加士居道 30 號 伊利沙伯醫院 F 座 7 字樓</p>
<p>North District Hospital Oral Maxillofacial Surgery &amp; Dental Unit LG1, North District Hospital 9 Po Kin Road, Fanling, N.T.</p> <p>Tel : 2683 7084                      Fax No.: 2683 7081</p>	<p>北區醫院口腔頤面外科及牙科部 新界粉嶺保健路 9 號北區醫院 LG1</p>
<p>Princess Margaret Hospital Oral Maxillofacial Surgery &amp; Dental Unit LG 2, Block F, Princess Margaret Hospital 2-10 Lai King Hill Road, Kwai Chung, N.T.</p> <p>Tel : 2990 1644                      Fax No.: 2370 0784</p>	<p>瑪嘉烈醫院口腔頤面外科及牙科部 葵涌荔景山道 2-10 號 瑪嘉烈醫院 F 座低層 2 樓</p>
<p>Prince of Wales Hospital Oral Maxillofacial Surgery &amp; Dental Unit 1/F, Li Ka Shing Specialist Clinic (North Wing), Prince of Wales Hospital 30-32 Ngan Shing Street, Shatin, N.T.</p> <p>Tel : 2632 2380                      Fax No.: 2649 8079</p>	<p>威爾斯親王醫院口腔頤面外科及牙科部 沙田銀城街 30-32 號 威爾斯親王醫院李嘉誠專科診所(北翼)1 字樓</p>
<p>Tuen Mun Hospital Oral Maxillofacial Surgery &amp; Dental Unit T-9, Tuen Mun Hospital Tsing Chung Koon Road, Tuen Mun, N.T.</p> <p>Tel : 2468 5759                      Fax No.: 2465 3112</p>	<p>屯門醫院口腔頤面外科及牙科部 屯門青松觀道屯門醫院手術大樓九樓 T 座</p>