

**Legislative Council Panel on Health Services**  
**Role and Operation of**  
**the Chinese Medicine Centres for Training and Research**

**Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the role and operation of the Chinese Medicine Centres for Training and Research (CMCTRs).

**Background**

2. To promote the development of “evidence-based” Chinese medicine and provide training placements for graduates of local undergraduate programmes in Chinese medicine, a CMCTR has been set up in each of the 18 districts. These CMCTRs operate under a tripartite collaboration model involving the Hospital Authority (HA), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local universities offering undergraduate programmes in Chinese medicine (i.e. the Hong Kong Baptist University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong). The NGOs are responsible for the running and day-to-day operation of the CMCTRs.

3. The first three CMCTRs and the 18th CMCTR were set up in December 2003 and July 2014 respectively to provide Chinese medicine services for members of the public. The addresses of the 18 CMCTRs, and the NGOs and universities concerned are listed at **Annex I**.

**An Overview of CMCTRs**

4. Under the tripartite collaboration model, the HA selects suitable NGOs to run the CMCTRs through tendering exercises, and regulates their operation by contract. The NGOs are responsible for running the CMCTRs and their day-to-day operation, providing support for relevant scientific research projects and “evidence-based” training for Chinese medicine practitioners (CMPs) of the CMCTRs in accordance with the contract terms, while the universities are responsible for providing research and academic

support for the NGOs. Apart from receiving funding support from the Government, the CMCTRs operate on a self-financing basis through charging fees as detailed below and providing other services.

5. The services provided by the CMCTRs are not part of the HA's regular services. The standard fee for Chinese medicine general consultation service is \$120 (including consultation fee and up to two doses of Chinese medicine). The rate has been maintained at this level without adjustment since the establishment of the first CMCTR in 2003. The fees for other Chinese medicine services, such as acupuncture, bone-setting, tui-na and body weight control programme, provided by the CMCTRs are determined by the NGOs concerned. For the provision of Chinese medicine general consultation service, each CMCTR sets aside at least 20% of its consultation quota for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance recipients, who can receive the service with the standard fee of \$120 waived. Individual NGOs also offer discounts to different groups of people, such as the elderly, through their CMCTRs.

6. In 2017, the total number of attendances at the 18 CMCTRs exceeded 1.2 million. The respective numbers of attendances at each of the CMCTRs are listed at **Annex II**.

### **On-the-job training opportunities provided by CMCTRs**

7. The CMCTRs play an important role in nurturing local Chinese medicine professionals. Graduates of local full-time Chinese medicine undergraduate programmes may apply for working and receiving training at the CMCTRs for three years, during which they will be employed as CMP trainees. The NGOs which run the CMCTRs are required to employ at least 12 CMP trainees in each of the CMCTRs and provide them with training. Currently, the 18 CMCTRs provide a total of 216 training places for CMP trainees, of which at least 72 places must be allocated to CMPs with less than a year's experience in clinical practice.

8. The CMPs of the CMCTRs are also provided with opportunities to participate in pre-employment training, clinical training, visiting scholar scheme, junior and senior scholarship scheme, training in research knowledge and practical knowledge, commissioned training in western medicine, Chinese medicine research, on-line training courses, etc.

## **Remuneration Package for Employees of CMCTRs**

9. All staff working at the CMCTRs (including CMPs of various ranks and supporting staff) are employed by the NGOs operating the CMCTRs. The remuneration package for the staff is determined by the NGOs concerned. As at 31 December 2017, there were a total of 401 CMPs of various ranks employed by the CMCTRs (258 of them were graduates of local undergraduate programmes in Chinese medicine) accounting for about 4% of the CMPs in Hong Kong.

10. To attract more talent to join the Chinese medicine sector, the Chief Executive announced in her Policy Address in October 2017 that the Government will review the remuneration package and promotion opportunities for staff employed at all levels in the CMCTRs in the 18 districts. Starting from December 2017, the Government has allocated additional funding for the NGOs to increase the salaries of the staff at CMP rank (i.e. CMPs practicing in the fourth to ninth year after graduating from the universities) of the CMCTRs. Moreover, the HA is further reviewing with the NGOs the remuneration package and promotion opportunities for CMCTR staff at all levels (including CMPs of various ranks), and will allocate additional funding to enhance their career prospects in the light of the review findings.

11. According to the 2016/17 statistics, the average turnover rate of CMPs of the 18 CMCTRs was about 15%. As one of the main purposes of establishing the CMCTRs is to nurture Chinese medicine professionals for the local industry, a portion of the CMP trainees who have completed the three-year training at the CMCTRs, will continue to work at the CMCTRs while the rest will join the private sector or other organisations. This is in line with the purposes of establishing the CMCTRs.

## **Development of Research of CMCTRs**

12. To facilitate the development of “evidence-based” Chinese medicine is one of the purposes of establishing the CMCTRs. The HA actively collaborates with the CMCTRs and local universities to conduct systematic research programmes on Chinese medicine herbs and diseases. Since 2006, a total of 45 Chinese medicine research projects have been completed and more than 50 scholar articles published in academic journals. As at the end of March 2018, four clinical research projects were underway, including stroke-related diseases and Chinese and Western Medicine Collaborative Studies on palliative cancer patients with constipation.

13. The HA launched the Chinese Medicine Research Practical Training Programme in 2015-16. Under the programme, the CMCTRs collaborate with local universities under the tripartite model to provide training for Chinese medicine professionals, aiming to equip them with clinical research skills, thereby enhancing the competency of the CMCTR teams, enhancing the research capacity of the CMCTRs, as well as promoting a culture of “evidence-based” Chinese medicine. So far, six CMCTRs have participated in the programme. More CMCTRs will be invited to join the programme to promote the development of “evidence-based” Chinese medicine.

### **Role of CMCTRs in the Integrated Chinese-Western Medicine Pilot Programme**

14. To gather experience regarding the Integrated Chinese-Western medicine (ICWM) and operation of Chinese medicine in-patient services, the HA launched the ICWM Pilot Programme (Pilot Programme) in September 2014. Phase II of the Pilot Programme was implemented in December 2015. Under the Pilot Programme, ICWM treatment covering in-patient services and Chinese medicine out-patient follow-up services for in-patients of three selected disease areas (namely stroke care, low back pain care and cancer palliative care) is provided in seven HA hospitals. Phase III of the Pilot Programme, which was commenced in April 2018, extended to cover a disease area on shoulder and neck pain care.

15. Under the Pilot Programme, ICWM treatment is provided for HA patients under ICWM operational and clinical frameworks while the relevant Chinese medicine services are provided by NGO-operated CMCTRs under the arrangements of the HA. Disease areas, scope of services and management of clinical practice are three key considerations for formulating the clinical framework. On the other hand, the operational framework covers three major areas, including operational guidelines, HA risk management and project management.

### **Proposed Chinese Medicine Hospital**

16. The Government is actively developing the first Chinese medicine hospital in Hong Kong. The Government has commissioned a consultant through the HA to consult local stakeholders as well as experts outside Hong Kong on various issues regarding the development of the Chinese medicine hospital. We will map out the direction for developing the Chinese medicine hospital with the HA and relevant parties in the light of the findings of the consultancy report. It is expected that the positioning

and the development framework of major areas of the Chinese medicine hospital will be announced in the first half of 2018.

17. Apart from providing Chinese medicine services, the proposed Chinese medicine hospital will also support local Chinese medicine education and research development. This development direction is in line with the operational model of the CMCTRs. In planning the positioning and development direction of the Chinese medicine hospital, the Government will consider the interaction and synergy between the Chinese medicine hospital and the CMCTRs, so as to optimise the functions of the CMCTRs which in turn will provide better support for the development of the Chinese medicine hospital.

### **Advice Sought**

18. The Government will keep under review the role and operation of the CMCTRs so as to tie in with the long-term development of Chinese medicine in Hong Kong. Members are invited to note the contents of the paper.

**Food and Health Bureau  
Hospital Authority  
April 2018**

## Annex I

### The 18 Chinese Medicine Centres for Training and Research in Hong Kong

(In chronological order according to date of commencement)

<b>District</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>NGO responsible for its operation</b>	<b>Participating university</b>
Central and Western	G/F & 1/F, Yeo Wing (Specialist Outpatient Department), Tung Wah Hospital, 12 Po Yan Street, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong	TWGHs	HKU
Tsuen Wan	4/F, Block C, Yan Chai Hospital, 7-11 Yan Chai Street, Tsuen Wan, New Territories	YCH	HKBU
Tai Po	G/F, Block J, Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital, 11 Chuen On Road, Tai Po, New Territories	UCMS	CUHK
Wan Chai	2/F, Tang Shiu Kin Hospital Community Ambulatory Care Centre, 282 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong	HKTBA	HKU
Sai Kung	6/F, Ambulatory Care Block, Tseung Kwan O Hospital, No 2 Po Ning Lane, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O, Kowloon	HHCS	CUHK
Yuen Long	3/F, Yuen Long Madam Yung Fung Shee Health Centre, 26 Sai Ching Street, Yuen Long, New Territories	POH	CUHK
Tuen Mun	5/F, Yan Oi Polyclinic, 6 Tuen Lee Street, Tuen Mun, New Territories	YOT	CUHK
Kwun Tong	4/F, Ngau Tau Kok Jockey Club Clinic, 60 Ting On Street, Ngau Tau Kok, Kowloon	CFSC	CUHK
Kwai Tsing	G/F, Ha Kwai Chung Polyclinic & Special Education Services Centre, 77 Lai Cho Road, Kwai Chung, New Territories	YCH	HKBU
Eastern	Lower 4th Floor, West Wing, Specialist Out-Patient Block, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, 3 Lok Man Road, Chai Wan, Hong Kong	TWGHs	HKU

<b>District</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>NGO responsible for its operation</b>	<b>Participating university</b>
North	7/F, Fanling Health Centre, 2 Pik Fung Road, Fanling, New Territories	HKFTU	HKBU
Wong Tai Sin	G/F & M/F, Block C, Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital, 10 Heng Lam Street, Lok Fu, Kowloon	HKBA	HKU
Shatin	G/F, Shatin (Taiwai) Clinic, 2 Man Lai Road, Tai Wai, Shatin, New Territories	POH	CUHK
Sham Shui Po	1/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon	YCH	HKBU
Southern	2/F, 10 Aberdeen Reservoir Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong	HKTBA	HKU
Kowloon City	Unit 401-412, Po Man House, Oi Man Estate, Ho Man Tin, Kowloon	POH	HKBU
Yau Tsim Mong	9/F, Block R, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 30 Gascoigne Road, Jordan, Kowloon	POH	HKBU
Islands	1/F, Tung Chung Health Centre, 6 Fu Tung Street, Tung Chung, Lantau Island, New Territories	YOT	HKU

#### Notes

- HKU : The University of Hong Kong  
 HKBU : Hong Kong Baptist University  
 CUHK : The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
 TWGHs : Tung Wah Group of Hospitals  
 YCH : Yan Chai Hospital  
 UCMS : United Christian Medical Service  
 HKTBA : The Hong Kong Tuberculosis, Chest and Heart Diseases Association  
 HHCS : Haven of Hope Christian Service  
 POH : Pok Oi Hospital  
 YOT : Yan Oi Tong  
 CFSC : Christian Family Service Centre  
 HKFTU : Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions Workers' Medical Clinics  
 HKBA : The Hong Kong Buddhist Association

**Annex II**

**Attendances at the 18 Chinese Medicine Centres  
for Training and Research in 2017**

(In chronological order according to date of commencement)

<b>District</b>	<b>Number of attendances for general consultation service</b>	<b>Number of attendances for other Chinese medicine services<sup>note</sup></b>	<b>Total</b>
Central and Western	29 084	30 546	59 630
Tsuen Wan	34 943	41 632	76 575
Tai Po	43 613	34 202	77 815
Wan Chai	47 170	25 902	73 072
Sai Kung	37 544	24 275	61 819
Yuen Long	34 389	53 973	88 362
Tuen Mun	34 491	33 147	67 638
Kwun Tong	39 822	34 353	74 175
Kwai Tsing	19 326	40 145	59 471
Eastern	22 285	35 913	58 198
North	52 426	28 080	80 506
Wong Tai Sin	31 315	33 986	65 301
Shatin	31 127	46 552	77 679
Sham Shui Po	32 069	41 273	73 342
Southern	44 240	19 255	63 495
Kowloon City	29 613	27 149	56 762
Yau Tsim Mong	24 743	33 677	58 420
Islands	24 669	16 474	41 143
<b>Total</b>	<b>612 869</b>	<b>600 534</b>	<b>1 213 403</b>

Note: Other Chinese medicine services provided by the NGOs through CMCTRs cover acupuncture, bone-setting, tui-na, Integrated Chinese-Western Medicine Pilot Project, etc.