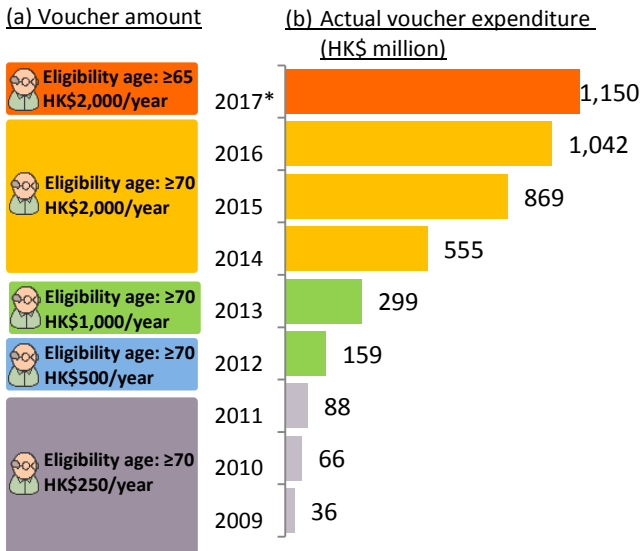




Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme

Figure 1 – EHV amount and actual expenditure of EHV Scheme, 2009-2017



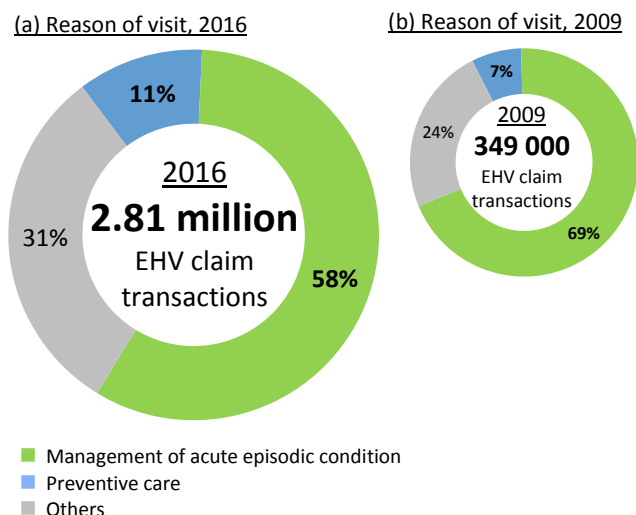
Note: (*) Data as at end-October 2017.

Figure 2 – Utilization rate of EHV Scheme, 2009-2017

	2009	2013	2016	2017*
No. of eligible elders ('000)	671	724	775	1 221
No. of elders who had made use of EHV ('000)	190	488	649	953
% share of eligible elders who had made use of EHV	28%	67%	84%	78%

Note: (*) Since 1 July 2017, the eligibility age for the EHV Scheme has been lowered from 70 to 65.

Figure 3 – EHV claim transactions by reason of visit, 2009 and 2016



Highlights

- The Government launched the Elderly Health Care Voucher ("EHV") Pilot Scheme in 2009 to subsidize eligible elders to use private primary care services in the community that best suit their needs. The scheme was converted into a recurrent programme in 2014. Since the implementation of the EHV Scheme, the Government has increased the voucher amount thrice to the current HK\$2,000, while unspent voucher can be accumulated up to HK\$4,000 for later use. Moreover, the eligibility age for the EHV Scheme has been lowered from 70 to 65 since 1 July 2017 (**Figure 1**).
- The number of eligible elders and utilization of EHV have increased visibly consequential to the enhancement measures introduced in recent years (**Figure 2**). The proportion of eligible elders who had made use of EHV also tripled from 28% in 2009 to 84% in 2016. The figure dropped slightly to 78% in 2017, probably due to introduction of a lowered eligibility age in July 2017, causing a large increase in EHV-eligible population.
- In 2016, a total of 2.81 million EHV claim transactions were made. Despite the majority of 58% of EHV claims were made for the management of acute episodic condition in 2016, the proportion was slowly decreasing from the level of 69% in 2009. On the contrary, an increasing number of elderly were giving higher priority to preventive care when coming to healthcare spending decision, as respective proportion of EHV claim transactions increased from 7% in 2009 to 11% in 2016 (**Figure 3**).

Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme (cont'd)

Figure 4 – Statistics of the EHV Scheme, 2009-2017

	2009	2013	2016	2017
No. of healthcare professionals enrolled to the EHV Scheme	2 540	3 976	6 144	7 153
No. of places of practice accepting EHV	3 202	5 543	11 851	15 577

Figure 5 – Number and growth rate of enrolled private healthcare providers by healthcare profession, 2013-2017

	2013	2017	Growth
Medical Practitioners	1 645	2 387	+45%
Chinese Medicine Practitioners	1 282	2 424	+89%
Dentists	408	895	+119%
Optometrists	167	641	+284%
Physiotherapists	267	396	+48%
Nurses	79	182	+130%
Chiropractors	45	71	+58%
Occupational Therapists	39	69	+77%
Medical Lab Technologists	25	48	+92%
Radiographers	19	40	+111%
Total	3 976	7 153	+80%

Figure 6 – Proportion of practising private healthcare professionals participating in the EHV Scheme, 2016

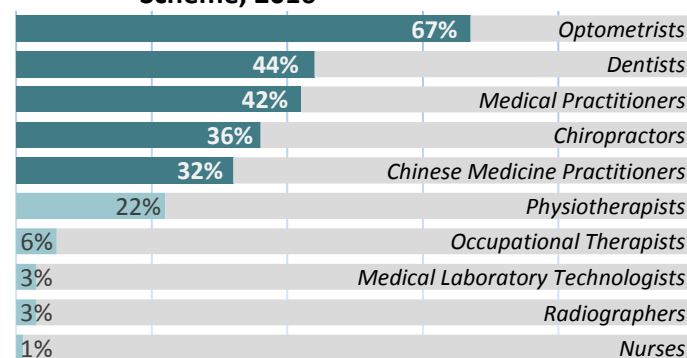
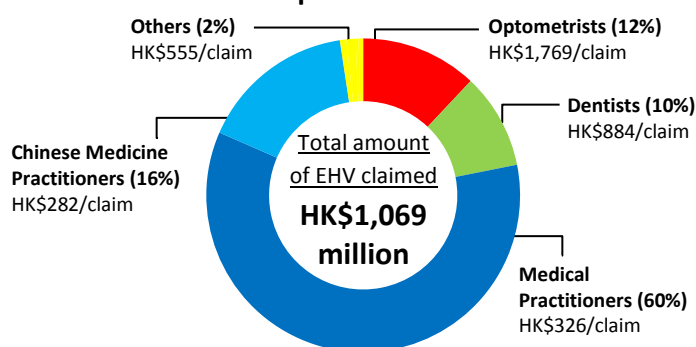


Figure 7 – Average cost per EHV claim transaction by healthcare profession in 2016



Highlights

- There was also a marked increase in the participation of healthcare professionals and the places of practice accepting EHV. In 2017, a total of 7 153 healthcare professionals enrolled in the scheme, involving 15 577 places of practices (**Figure 4**).
- At present, 10 categories of healthcare professionals practising in Hong Kong are eligible to participate in the scheme. The number of participating healthcare professionals has been on the increase since the commencement of the scheme. During 2013-2017, optometrists registered the most rapid growth (+284%), followed by nurses (130%), dentists (119%), and radiographers (111%) (**Figure 5**).
- Nevertheless, the proportion of practising private healthcare professionals participating in the EHV scheme varied between these professions. As shown in **Figure 6**, the participation rate of optometrists was the highest at 67% in 2016, followed by dentists (44%), medical practitioners (42%), chiropractors (36%) and Chinese medicine practitioners (32%). Participation rates of other private health professionals were relatively low, ranging from 1% for nurses to 22% for physiotherapists in 2016.
- An added concern is that the amount of subsidy received by the elderly under the EHV scheme might not be enough to cover the high private healthcare costs. As shown in **Figure 7**, a single visit to the dentist (HK\$884) or optometrist (HK\$1,769) may exhaust a significant portion of the annual voucher amount. The Department of Health is currently conducting a comprehensive review of the EHV scheme. According to the Government, it might further enhance the scheme taking into account the review findings and the Government's fiscal conditions.

Data sources: Census and Statistics Department, Department of Health, and Food and Health Bureau.