

**For discussion  
on 14 March 2025**

**Legislative Council Panel on Health Services**

**Development of Chinese Medicine**

**PURPOSE**

This paper briefs Members on the latest progress of policy initiatives related to the development of Chinese medicine (CM).

**FORMULATION OF THE CHINESE MEDICINE DEVELOPMENT BLUEPRINT**

2. The Government is formulating the Chinese Medicine Development Blueprint (the Blueprint) in collaboration with the CM sector, which will be released in end-2025, to map out the future developmental directions of CM in Hong Kong. The Chinese Medicine Unit (CMU) of the Health Bureau (HHB) has, since the assumption of office of the Commissioner for Chinese Medicine Development in May 2024, participated in/organised more than 200 local, Mainland and overseas CM-related activities, meetings, exchange visits, consultation sessions, including meetings and exchanges with different Mainland ministries/commissions and provincial/municipal authorities, and participating in meetings on traditional medicine organised by the World Health Organization (WHO) Western Pacific Region etc., to gain an in-depth understanding of the current situation of the sector and explore measures and programmes that are conducive to the local, national and global development of CM, thereby facilitating the formulation of Blueprint.

3. To gather views in a more extensive and focused manner during the formulation process, the Chinese Medicine Development Committee agreed earlier to set up a Chinese Medicine Development Blueprint Subcommittee, as well as the three thematic working groups to focus on discussion regarding service development, industry development and cultural popularisation, and professional development and talent cultivation respectively.

4. Summarizing the views collected at this stage, the main strategic directions of the Blueprint include –

- (a) establishing a comprehensive CM governance framework and service system;
- (b) strengthening the role of CM in primary healthcare, for example, to explore enhancing the role of Chinese medicine practitioners (CMPs) in providing services for chronic disease management and diseases in which CM has an advantage through strategic purchasing;
- (c) further leveraging the therapeutic advantages of CM and integrated Chinese-Western medicine (ICWM), and strengthening the cross-disciplinary understanding and collaboration between CMPs and other healthcare professionals;
- (d) ascertaining the core competency, assessment standards and training pathway for CM undergraduate education and advanced professional training, so as to formulate a professional development system for CM personnel to dovetail with the future development needs;
- (e) reviewing the prevailing regulatory framework of CM for updating the relevant legislation and requirements;
- (f) driving scientific research and innovation in CM by capitalising the platforms such as the Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Institute (GBAICTI), The Chinese Medicine Hospital of Hong Kong (CMHHK) and the Government Chinese Medicines Testing Institute (GCMTI);
- (g) facilitating elevation of the Chinese medicines (CMs) industry, and assisting local and Mainland high-quality CMs products to exploit the overseas markets;
- (h) fostering cultural inheritance, education and promotion of CM extensively; and
- (i) utilising Hong Kong's international status to promote CM management standards, service and education system models to the world, etc.

## CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE MEDICINE SERVICES

### *Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres*

5. To promote CM development and talent training in Hong Kong, the Government established the Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres (CMCTRs) in all 18 districts across the city. They are operated by the Hospital Authority (HA), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local universities under the tripartite collaboration model. The NGOs are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the CMCTRs. Subsequent to their repositioning in March 2020, the 18 CMCTRs have been providing government-subsidised CM out-patient services at the district level, in addition to their original functions of teaching and research (i.e. providing training and taking forward CM research, etc.) and provision of non-government-subsidised services. Since 1 October 2023, the annual quota of government-subsidised out-patient CM services provided by the 18 CMCTRs has increased by over 30% from about 600 000 to 800 000. The total service attendance (including government-subsidised and non-government-subsidised CM out-patient services, ICWM services and Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinic services) of the 18 CMCTRs was about 1.6 million in 2024.

### *Integrated Chinese-Western Medicine Services*

6. To gather experience in the operation of ICWM and CM in-patient services, the Government has earlier commissioned the HA to launch the ICWM services through a Pilot Programme, to provide ICWM treatment to in-patients under the three designated disease areas (namely stroke care, musculoskeletal pain management and cancer palliative care) through the 18 CMCTRs. To dovetail with the policy direction of strengthening ICWM services, the HA regularised and further expanded the services to more hospital sites in early 2023, enabling more patients to benefit from such services.

7. Succeeding the implementation experience and effectiveness of the ICWM services, the HA piloted three new ICWM programmes on cancer care, respiratory diseases and knee osteoarthritis care by phases starting from the latter half of 2023. Among them, the Cancer Care Pilot Programme, which was first launched in the latter half of 2023 in Kowloon West Cluster and New Territories West Cluster, was subsequently extended to the Hong Kong West Cluster and Hong Kong East Cluster in the third quarter of 2024 and the first quarter of 2025 respectively, and will continue to be extended to the three remaining clusters.

8. As at end-December 2024, the number of public hospitals providing ICWM services has increased from eight to 26, with the number of designated hospital sites significantly increased to 61. The HA will continue to expand the ICWM services to cover more disease areas in which CM has an advantage, as well as hospital sites, so as to further leverage the strengths of CM and ICWM.

### *Role of Chinese Medicine in Primary Healthcare*

9. The Government actively promotes the enhancement of CM service elements in District Health Centres (DHCs), including encouraging CMPs to join as part of the community network service providers. Members with stroke, knee arthritis, and back pain may opt for subsidised CM services, which include acupuncture and acupressure treatment according to their needs. Network CMPs under the community service network also provide disease prevention, health maintenance, and health education. DHCs also plan to collaborate with the CMCTRs, including promoting or providing Tianjiu service at DHCs under collaborative model. The Government will further explore the involvement of CM in the primary healthcare reference frameworks, with a view to unleashing the potential advantage of CM in health management and facilitating cross-disciplinary collaboration in primary healthcare services.

10. The Government has launched the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme (EHVS) which aims at providing financial incentives for elderly persons to choose private primary healthcare services that best suit their health needs (including CM services). As of the end of 2024, a total of 4 551 CMPs have enrolled in the EHVS. Over the past three years, the amount of vouchers claimed by elderly person for CM services has increased year-on-year. During January to December 2024, the number of voucher claim transactions was over 5.2 million and the total amount of vouchers claimed was around \$3,346 million. Among them, around 2.16 million transactions (accounting for about 41.4% of the total) and nearly \$1,228 million (accounting for about 36.7% of the total) were claimed by CMPs, both ranking the second highest among the 14 healthcare professions under the EHVS, demonstrating that CM services is popular among the elderly persons in primary healthcare services under the EHVS.

### *Cross-Disciplinary Referral and Collaboration*

11. Regarding the acceptance of CMPs' referral of patients by supplementary medical professionals (including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, radiographers and medical laboratory technologists), the

Government has planned to introduce the Supplementary Medical Professions (Amendment) Bill 2025 into the Legislative Council in the first half of 2025 in order to provide a clear legal basis for supplementary medical professionals to accept referrals from CMPs with a view to fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration. In December 2023, the HHB took the initiative to invite the Chinese Medicine Council of Hong Kong (CMCHK) and its Chinese Medicine Practitioners Board in writing for setting up a working group to initiate relevant professional discussion. In 2024, the working group conducted an in-depth study on matters including the core professional competencies required, training needs and associated medical professional liabilities of CMPs for making such referrals, and has planned to develop reference standards and relevant guidelines. The working group has met with the Boards of relevant supplementary healthcare professions to initiate discussion on implementation details and relevant arrangements, with a view to further forging consensus. The Government will continue to facilitate communication between stakeholders from various professions under the principle of professional autonomy, and closely monitor the progress of relevant professional discussions, with a view to making appropriate arrangements and co-ordination in terms of legislative amendments and specific implementation for the orderly implementation of the referral arrangements.

### *eHealth*

12. The Government is committed to promoting the digitalisation of CM healthcare services and encouraging CMPs to use the Electronic Health Record Sharing System, known as “eHealth”. Since March 2022, CMPs registered with eHealth can access and share clinical records related to CM services with domains include CM diagnoses, CM procedures, CMs prescribing and dispensing records, encounter and appointment records, allergy and CMs adverse drug reactions, with patients' sharing consents. CMPs can also access records of hospitalisation, encounter and appointment, immunisation, allergies and adverse drug reaction that are uploaded by other healthcare providers.

13. To facilitate the sharing of CM information on eHealth, the Government has developed and officially launched “EC Connect”<sup>1</sup> in July 2022, a clinical management system for CM sector, taking into account the views of the sector and the actual operation of CM clinics. “EC Connect”

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<sup>1</sup> Apart from providing essential functions of a typical clinical management system such as patient registration and appointment, clinical documentation, prescriptions and dispensary, billing, etc., special features related to consultations on non-drug treatments such as acupuncture and bone-setting by CMPs are included in “EC Connect”. To enable effective communication among CMPs, standardised terminologies are incorporated into the system, and users may also customise terminologies to meet their needs better. Furthermore, EC Connect complies with the security and system interoperability requirements for data sharing in “eHealth”, paving the way for the connection with eHealth for sharing CM clinical data.

primarily supports the computerisation of the daily administration and clinical management of CM clinics in need, while also providing a choice to CM clinics for a software connecting with “eHealth”, with a purpose to promote the sharing of CM clinical data.

14. As at February 2025, about 500 CM healthcare service providers and nearly 970 CMPs have registered “eHealth”. There are around 160 CM clinics using “EC Connect”.

## **FLAGSHIP INSTITUTIONS FOR PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE MEDICINE**

15. The Government is pursuing the preparatory work for two flagship institutions for CM development, i.e. CMHHK and the GCMTI permanent premises. It is expected that the two institutions will be commissioned at end-2025 and commence services in phases as scheduled.

### *The Chinese Medicine Hospital of Hong Kong*

16. The CMHHK is located at 1 Pak Shing Kok Road, Tseung Kwan O. The CMHHK will provide primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare services. It will provide 400 beds with provision of pure CM services, services with CM playing the predominant role and ICWM services. Its service scope includes in-patient, day-patient, out-patient and community outreach services. As a flagship CM institution in Hong Kong, the CMHHK will undertake five key missions of development i.e. provision of government-subsidised and market-oriented healthcare services, training and education, research, collaboration, and creation of health values. The CMHHK will also serve as a “change driver” in close collaboration with the CM sector and stakeholders to propel the overall CM development in Hong Kong, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) and the international community.

17. The Chinese Medicine Hospital Project Office of the HHB has been working closely with the Architectural Services Department as well as the CMHHK’s Contractor and Operator to actively pursue the preparatory work for the hospital’s commissioning, with a view to commencing services in phases from December 2025 onwards. The CMHHK will provide out-patient and day-patient services at the first year of service commencement covering a full range of six specialised CM services, namely Internal Medicine in CM, External Medicine in CM, Gynaecology in CM, Paediatrics in CM, Orthopaedics and Traumatology in CM and Acupuncture and Moxibustion in

CM services. Starting from the second year of service commencement, the CMHHK will provide comprehensive in-patient services by phases. The preparatory work for hospital commissioning includes closely monitoring and assessing the building contractor's work progress, conducting tests on information technology systems, and procuring and installing furniture and equipment. At present, the CMHHK's core management team is focusing on, among other tasks, establishing governance structure; setting up operation system; formulating corporate policies, manpower planning and remuneration packages; applying for the licences required for various services; drawing up details of fees and charges for market-oriented services; and developing a mechanism for collaboration among the three local universities providing undergraduate programmes in CM, the HA and the 18 CMCTRs. In addition, the Government introduced The Chinese Medicine Hospital of Hong Kong Bill into the Legislative Council in February 2025 to dovetail with the operational needs of the hospital.

18. As an “open hospital”, the CMHHK welcomes industry participation in hospital work in different ways, which will promote patient flow, talent flow and knowledge flow. The CMHHK established a talent pool mechanism at end-2024 and welcomes registration by CMPs, CMs professionals, healthcare personnel and other healthcare professionals who are interested in taking part in its work. Registered healthcare professionals of the talent pool will be given priority in taking part in relevant training, while the Operator will keep them abreast of the latest development of the CMHHK through different channels and proactively approach and invite them to work at the hospital when appropriate. In regard to exchanges and liaison with the Mainland and overseas, the CMHHK signed strategic co-operation agreements with the Guangdong Provincial Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the TCM-Klinik Bad Kötzting in Germany in January 2024 and January 2025 respectively to lay the foundation for talent exchange, research collaboration and CM internationalisation.

#### *Government Chinese Medicines Testing Institute*

19. Starting from 2017, the Department of Health (DH) has established a temporary facility for the GCMTI at the Hong Kong Science Park, while concurrently planning for the construction of its permanent premises. Since its establishment, the GCMTI has been actively taking forward the work on research, education as well as promotion of international collaboration on CMs testing. Such work includes developing a set of internationally recognised reference standards and testing methods for CMs and their products, and promoting the commercial application of these methods in the CMs and testing sectors through training and technology transfer programmes, with a view to

establishing the brand image of Hong Kong CM and developing Hong Kong into an international hub for scientific research on CMs testing and quality control. A recent example is the successful development and announcement of a highly versatile analytical method for testing chemical markers, which can be widely applied to the testing of various formulations and dosage forms of proprietary Chinese medicines (pCms) for nourishing and Yang invigorating. This method has been made available for use by the CMs and testing sectors, helping them save both costs and time.

20. To accelerate CMs informatisation and digitalisation while promoting information sharing, the GCMTI officially launched the world-class Digital Herbarium for Chinese Medicines (DHCM) in March 2024 to provide members of the public and relevant sectors including the CM profession and research institutions with comprehensive, accessible and accurate digital CMs information. Featuring high-resolution pictures and related data of 220 commonly used CMs and their source plants, it is the first online herbarium of its kind to provide comprehensive CMs information, and also the first in the world to use photogrammetry to produce three-dimensional images of traceable CMs specimens. The DHCM helps advance the innovative application of CMs data resources and serves as an important database for relevant stakeholders engaged in CMs scientific research, education and application.

## **EXCHANGES AND CO-OPERATION IN CHINESE MEDICINE WITH THE MAINLAND**

21. With unique advantages of the “One Country, Two Systems” principle, Hong Kong has always enjoyed strong support of the motherland. The Government has been working proactively with the CM sector to deepen Hong Kong’s collaboration with the Mainland and the GBA in various areas of CM. Exchanges and communication are also maintained with various Mainland ministries/commissions as well as provincial and municipal governments/delegations of committees of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference on issues related to CM development.

22. The Government is committed to enhancing Hong Kong’s role under the Construction Plan for the Chinese Medicine Highlands in the GBA (2020-2025). Hong Kong will actively integrate into the national development of CM, giving full play to its advantages as the country’s gateway to international markets in promoting the modernisation and internationalisation of CM. With support from the motherland, public healthcare institutions in Mainland cities within the GBA have recruited Hong Kong CMPs, enabling them to work in the national healthcare system; following the streamlining of approval



procedures for Hong Kong's traditional pCms for external use to be registered in the Mainland, we have also successfully secured the extension of the relevant policy to cover pCms for oral use (see paragraph 40). In addition, Hong Kong will host the 7<sup>th</sup> GBA Conference on Inheritance, Innovation and Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine in 2025, where representatives from the three places and nine municipalities in the GBA will gather in Hong Kong to witness a number of important milestones in CM development in Hong Kong.

23. In terms of cooperation in the field of CMs specimens and technical exchanges on standardisation of Chinese Materia Medica (CMM), collaboration agreements and arrangements regarding research in CMs standards, CMM herbarium, and quality testing of CMs were signed in 2024, between the HHB and the National Medical Products Administration (NMPA), and between the DH and the National Institutes for Food and Drug Control under the NMPA and the China Academy Chinese Medical Sciences under the National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (NATCM) respectively, with a view to deepening cooperation and exchanges.

24. In respect of building a high-quality CM talent pool, with strong support from the NATCM and related Mainland ministries/commissions, Hong Kong is actively promoting various types of CM talent nurturing programmes (such as the HHB's Hong Kong Chinese Medicine Talent Training Programme, the HA's GBA Chinese Medicine Visiting Scholars Programme, Enhanced CM In-patient Training Programme with GBA and CM Scholarship Programme, etc.), and encouraging local CMPs to participate in various CM training programmes and award schemes in the Mainland (such as award schemes for National Medicine Masters and National Famous Traditional CMPs, and talent nurturing programmes for Qi Huang Scholars and Qi Huang Young Scholars), creating more opportunities for professional exchanges and training of CM talents in the two places. The HHB and the Traditional Chinese Medicine Bureau of Guangdong Province signed a framework agreement on CM talent nurturing in Guangdong and Hong Kong in 2024, to strengthen talent training and exchange cooperation and establish a long-term cooperation mechanism. Furthermore, the Schools of CM in Hong Kong have also set up work stations for renowned CMPs to carry forward their knowledge, thereby facilitating the synergistic nurturing of CM talents while promoting academic exchanges and inheritance.

## **HONG KONG AS A BRIDGEHEAD FOR PROMOTING THE INTERNATIONALISATION OF CHINESE MEDICINE**

25. Promoting the internationalisation of CM and developing Hong Kong into a bridgehead for the internationalisation of CM is a policy direction proposed by the Chief Executive in his 2024 Policy Address. Hong Kong's healthcare system is comparable to other mainstream healthcare systems in the world. Over the years, Hong Kong has developed and regulated Chinese and Western medicine on a dual-track basis. Apart from accelerating the integration of CM into the healthcare system, Hong Kong has also accumulated extensive experience in providing pure CM and ICWM services. Among others, the ICWM services launched by the HA has established a relatively sophisticated and complete service delivery model. In the future, the CMHHK will further develop the "Hong Kong model" of pure CM, CM-predominant, and ICWM clinical services, and promote international co-operation in the areas of CM education, research, and services, with a view to promoting CM service, management standards and system development at the international level to other regions where modern medicine is dominant. To this end, the Government will support researches that are beneficial to the establishment of CM standards and international promotion through the Chinese Medicine Development Fund, so as to develop internationally recognised reference frameworks and standards.

26. Understanding the impact of the concurrent use of Chinese and Western medicines on efficacy and patient safety, is particularly critical in promoting the internationalisation of CM services and the CMs industry. To further strengthen the development of relevant research, the Government will leverage Hong Kong's strengths in electronic health record sharing and the HA's clinical management system to explore the application of CM and WM real-world clinical data for big data research and analysis. Meanwhile, the Government will also strive to establish an international scientific research collaboration network on herb-drug interaction, with the CMHHK serving as the implementation administrator, partnering with institutions in Hong Kong, the Mainland and overseas, to discover more clinically significant evidence of herb-drug interaction with a view of developing internationally recognised clinical guidelines for the concurrent use of Chinese and Western medicines. These efforts will help integrating CM services into the modern medicine-dominated healthcare system around the globe in long run, thereby facilitating CM to "go global".

27. In addition, starting from mid-2025, the Government will subsidise and encourage more large-scale international and regional CM conferences, exhibitions and events to be held in Hong Kong through the Chinese Medicine

Development Fund in order to further popularise the CM culture, promote CM professional development, strengthen international ties, attract high-level CM academic and research development, and showcase the latest sector development, thereby creating a favourable environment for business and technological innovation.

28. CMs standardisation is the essential cornerstone for further internationalisation of CM. As the WHO Collaborating Centre for Traditional Medicine, the Chinese Medicine Regulatory Office of the DH is committed to promoting the internationalisation of CMs, including provision of support for the WHO to hold a meeting in Hong Kong in November 2024 on the development of the International Herbal Pharmacopoeia (IHP). The draft outline, scope and framework of IHP, as well as the working mechanism for its development were discussed, with a view to providing a globally recognised reference on the use of herbal medicines in the future to ensure its quality and safety, while promoting the rational use of herbal medicines in clinical practice.

29. In addition, the GCMTI has also continued with its work on the formulation of the Hong Kong CMM Standards since 2002, with 11 volumes published, covering a total of 344 CMMs. Having completed 16 research or thematic projects so far, the GCMTI actively promotes its research results to the international community by organising various academic activities and participating in different authoritative platforms, thereby enhancing the role of Hong Kong in CM internationalisation and supporting the local CMs industry to further exploit the international markets.

30. On the internationalisation of the CMs industry, the Government will fully leverage Hong Kong's strengths in international trade, testing and certification and scientific research, and explore ways to enhance quality, ease of business and international promotion, thereby harnessing Hong Kong's value-added services. The Government will proactively facilitate CMs products of Hong Kong and Mainland to "go global" and explore overseas markets such as Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Belt and Road regions. In the future, multicentre cross-boundary clinical trials that can meet both national and international standards could be conducted for the CMs products of Hong Kong and Mainland under the co-ordination of the GBAICTI. This will leverage Hong Kong's unique advantages of a high degree of internationalisation, top-tier healthcare professions and scientific research, thereby boosting the internationalisation of CMs products. This also aligns with the direction outlined in the 2024 Policy Address for fostering new quality productive forces in medical technology and developing Hong Kong into an international health and medical innovation hub.

## CHINESE MEDICINE DEVELOPMENT FUND

31. As the first dedicated fund set up to support CM development, the Chinese Medicine Development Fund (CMDf) has been injected with a total of \$1 billion since its official launch in June 2019. The CMDf aims to enhance the overall standards of the CM sector to promote the high-quality development of CM in Hong Kong on all fronts. Having regard to the diverse needs of stakeholders, the CMDf has launched various support programmes<sup>2</sup> covering different areas to benefit CM personnel and organisations of different segments of the sector. As of end of February 2025, the CMDf has approved an accumulative total of about 8 900 funding applications, benefiting more than 3 million members of the sector and the general public, with major achievements listed below:

- (a) Talent nurturing: Close to 3 500 CMPs and CMs personnel have received subsidies to attend CM professional training programmes for continuously upskilling their professional knowledge and ability. The CMDf has supported programme providers to design and organise innovative training projects, benefitting over 41 300 practitioners. The CMDf has supported 85 CMPs and CMs personnel to participate in the Hong Kong Chinese Medicine Talent Training Programme co-organised by the NATCM and the HHB to cater for the need of establishing a talent pool;
- (b) Quality enhancement: The CMDf has supported more than 560 CM clinics and 220 Chm retailers/wholesalers to upgrade their facilities and equipment with a view to enhancing service quality and the safety and quality control of CMs. The CMDf has also supported nearly 180 pCm manufacturers/wholesalers to engage consultancy services or technical support for over 760 pCm products, thereby levelling up the quality of Hong Kong-registered pCm products;
- (c) Market development: The CMDf has provided subsidies for 12 Hong Kong-registered pCm products for external use to be registered and

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<sup>2</sup> The CMDf mainly comprises three types of support programmes, namely the Enterprise Support Programme (A Scheme), the Industry Support Programme (B Scheme) and the Strategic Theme Commissioned Project Funding Programme (C Scheme), under which various subordinate schemes are rolled out. A Scheme provides matching funds to individual practitioners, organisations, CMs traders, etc. to facilitate the development of local CM. B Scheme supports projects on, among others, professional training, talent exchange, awareness promotion, applied researches and thematic studies that can enhance overall professional standards and promote sector development. C Scheme provides support for commissioning organisations to conduct large-scale training, publicity and research projects on strategically priority themes conducive to CM development as a whole.

sold on the Mainland through streamlined approval procedures to promote industry development;

- (d) Research and applied studies: The CMDF has supported the commencement of 72 CM research and applied studies projects which are instrumental in driving academic and clinical research as well as the professional and industry development of CM in Hong Kong; and
- (e) Publicity and promotion: The CMDF has supported more than 1 100 CM publicity and public education activities of various forms, targeting audiences such as kindergarten, primary and secondary school students, and elderly persons.

32. Following to the additional injection of \$500 million in the 2023-24 Budget, the CMDF has rolled out various new and enhanced initiatives. For example:

- (a) launching the GBA pCm Industry Development Support Scheme in February 2024 to provide subsidies for Hong Kong-registered pCms for external use to apply for registration in the Mainland through the streamlined approval procedures;
- (b) raising the funding ceiling of CM public promotion projects to \$2 million from April 2024 to enhance the scale and effectiveness of public education and promotion projects designed and implemented by the CM sector;
- (c) establishing the Strategic Theme Commissioned Project Funding Programme to commission organisations to conduct large-scale training, publicity and research projects on strategically priority themes, and inviting organisations to submit applications in 2024 for the development of teaching and learning resource kits on CM education for primary and secondary schools, as well as the six talent training programmes for the development of the CMHHK, etc.

## **BUILDING A LOCAL TALENT POOL FOR CHINESE MEDICINE**

33. The Government has been committed to promoting the development of the CM talent pool in Hong Kong, including providing training opportunities

for CMPs<sup>3</sup>, CMs professionals and related healthcare professionals to meet future development needs.

34. The NATCM and the HHB have jointly launched the Hong Kong Chinese Medicine Talent Training Programme since November 2023. With funding support from the CMDF, Hong Kong CMPs and CMs professionals are provided with the opportunity to receive high-quality advanced training at training institutions under the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences. Two editions of short-term training programme (with duration of around one week) and one edition of medium-term training programme (with duration of around one month) training programmes have been completed so far, with a total of 85 participants. The NATCM and the HHB are currently planning to organise two editions of short-term training programme and one edition of medium-term training programme in mid-2025, in which Theory and Clinical Application of CM Classics, CM Paediatrics, CM Tui-na, and Research and Development of CMs, among others, will be added to the training topics in light of the future service needs of the CMHHK.

35. To meet the talent needs of the CMHHK, the CMDF has introduced the Talent Training Programme for the Development of Chinese Medicine Hospital under its Strategic Theme Commissioned Project Funding Programme to strengthen the building of a talent team for clinical and medical management in CM. Training topics in the pipeline include the CM Nursing Training Programme, Clinical Collaboration between CM and Nursing Professions, Clinical Collaboration between CM and Allied Health Professions, Healthcare Administration and Hospital Management in CM, Medico-legal Liability of Individuals and Institutions, and Clinical Risk Management and Patient Safety. These training programmes are expected to be gradually rolled out from mid-2025 onwards.

36. To foster the cultivation of local CM talents, the HA launched the GBA CM Visiting Scholars Programme and the CM Enhanced In-patient Training Programme with GBA in November 2022 and April 2024 respectively, with the aim to enhance the clinical competency of local CMPs in providing CM in-patient services on all fronts. The GBA CM Visiting Scholars Programme is Hong Kong's first CM in-patient training programme adopting "mentoring and shadowing" model, inviting CM experts from Tier III Class A CM hospitals in GBA to provide in-patient clinical training for local CMPs in public hospitals in Hong Kong. Since the launch of the programme, around 20 experienced CM experts have joined the CM expert pool, with around 130 local CMPs

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<sup>3</sup> As at 28 February 2025, there were approximately 10 700 CMPs in Hong Kong, including 8 574 registered CMPs, 2 077 listed CMPs and 39 CMPs with limited registration.

trained. For CM Enhanced In-patient Training Programme with GBA, it is the first-of-its-kind training programme. It is a breakthrough in arranging CMPs selected from the 18 CMCTRs to obtain Mainland practicing qualifications, enabling them to practice in the clinical teams of CM hospitals in GBA and receive advanced in-patient clinical training. The Guangdong Provincial Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine is the collaborating training partner for the first phase of the programme. At present, a total of 16 local CMPs have joined the programme, and the training scope has been expanded to three areas (neurology, acupuncture and oncology).

## **CULTURAL INHERITANCE AND PROMOTION OF CHINESE MEDICINE**

37. To promote cultural inheritance of CM, the HHB organised the first Hong Kong Chinese Medicine Culture Festival (Cultural Festival) from December 2024 to February 2025. Supported by over 80 organisations including the DH, the HA, the CMHHK, the Schools of CM of three local universities, the CM sector and community partners, the Cultural Festival featured over 200 promotional activities for CM culture in various forms, ranging from free consultation sessions, free health consultation, exhibitions, visits, online and physical thematic talks, exchange forums and seminars, to CM-related workshops, experiential activities and carnivals. First-hand experience through these activities has enabled citizens to enhance their interest in and understanding of the traditional wisdom and concepts of CM, thereby fostering CM inheritance and development.

38. The kick-off event of the Cultural Festival was held at the Central Market on 7 and 8 December 2024, staging a number of exhibitions and interactive booths as well as CM thematic talks for members of the public and various sectors. Given the enthusiastic response, a series of supporting events were rolled out successively in various districts across the city over the three-month Cultural Festival.

## **PROFESSIONAL AND RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT IN CHINESE MEDICINE**

39. The Government has all along been supportive to the professional development of CMPs and CMs professionals by facilitating the CM sector to reach consensus and promoting the elevation of professional standards in CM. The Chinese Medicine Industry Training Funding Scheme under the CMDF has been supporting the CM sector to design and launch professional talent training

programmes that are conducive to CM development. Various types of funded talent training programmes have been rolled out, covering areas such as academic inheritance from renowned masters, specialised research in disease areas and therapies, interdisciplinary collaboration, etc. Supported by the Chinese Medicine Applied Studies and Research Funding Scheme under the CMDF, various applied studies and researches have also been rolled out to take forward the development in areas such as CM traditional research, disease prevention and treatment as well as evidence-based medicine. Meanwhile, in order to encourage the sector to conduct more high-level researches with local and international impact to meet the needs of the future development of CM, the CMDF has provided a more detailed guideline to research project applicants to enhance the quality of relevant projects as well as the international status of Hong Kong in CM research in long run.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHINESE MEDICINE INDUSTRY**

40. The Government, through various funding schemes under the CMDF, supports the industry in upgrading their pCm manufacturing quality and management system, taking forward pCm registration, improving management and logistics equipment for CMs warehouses, etc. The CMDF has been maintaining close liaison with the industry and improving the funding scheme design and expanding the funding scope, to better meet the actual development needs of the CMs industry. Meanwhile, the CMDF has been keeping a close watch over the dynamics of and opportunities for industry growth to launch corresponding funding schemes in a timely manner to assist the CMs industry to explore markets, thereby creating favourable conditions for CM to “go global” in the long term. In particular, the CMDF launched the new GBA pCm Industry Development Support Scheme in February 2024 to subsidise the application fees for local pCm manufacturers or wholesalers to register eligible pCm products in the Mainland with the Guangdong Provincial Medical Products Administration through the streamlined approval procedures, thus facilitating Hong Kong pCms to exploit new markets. The NMPA announced the arrangement to streamline the approval procedures for Hong Kong-registered traditional pCms for oral use to be registered on the Mainland in January 2025. As the manufacturing process of these pCms must comply with the requirements of the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) for medicines, the DH plans to further enrich the content of its GMP sharing sessions in connection with the application for GMP Certificates and the various technical requirements of GMP implementation, thereby enhancing the understanding of GMP of the industry with a view to facilitating their compliance with GMP requirements in the manufacture of pCms.



41. To assist the local CMs industry to register pCms in Hong Kong, the DH provides, in addition to an enquiry hotline, face-to-face consultation services for individual applicants to answer their questions related to technical registration documents, etc. Besides, the DH offers co-ordination services for local pCm registration holders intending to explore the Mainland market, such as providing in an expeditious and effective manner free sale certificates of pCm and relevant supporting documents necessary for the registration of drugs in the Mainland.

42. In addition, all pCms currently holding transitional registration (HKP) have meet the requirements for safety, quality and efficacy. The process of converting HKP to formal registrations (HKC) is now focused on the approval of labels and package inserts. The Chinese Medicines Board (CMB) of the CMCHK has set a target to complete all approval of labels and package inserts by 30 June 2025.

## **CHINESE MEDICINE SECTOR'S JOINT RESPONSE TO PUBLIC HEALTH INCIDENTS**

43. As an integral part of Hong Kong's primary healthcare system, the CM sector has been actively involved in responding to public health incidents in the past, with a view to helping the city cope with the demand surge arising from seasonal influenza. To enable citizens in need to receive appropriate and timely professional CM support, the CMU of the HHB has earlier invited various CM bodies/organisations to assist in collecting information on the consultation arrangements of non-profit-making organisations and private CM clinics during the public holidays in 2024 Christmas and 2025 Lunar New Year. Such information collected from about 120 and over 300 CM clinics respectively has been timely uploaded onto the GeoInfo Map and the HHB's official website and forwarded to the CM sector, thereby providing citizens with more channels of access to the relevant information.

44. The CMU of the HHB will continue to maintain close communication with the CM sector and make timely appeals to CM clinics to provide additional services during demand surge and long holidays for promptly offering CM professional support to the public and alleviating the pressure on public hospital services. The strengths of CM in disease prevention and treatment as well as the extensive CM resources in the community will be leveraged by motivating and encouraging the CM sector to safeguard public health together with other healthcare professions.

## **PROPOSED TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO THE SCHEDULES TO THE CHINESE MEDICINE ORDINANCE**

45. At present, Schedules 1 and 2 to the Chinese Medicine Ordinance (the Ordinance) (Cap. 549) list 31 types of potent/toxic CMMs and 574 types of commonly used CMMs respectively. Each CMM is specified with its English or Latin name, alongside the scientific name of the plant and animal as well as the medicinal part. To promote the development of the local CM sector and facilitate exchanges with the Mainland and other countries, the CMCHK has completed the review of Schedules 1 and 2, including setting up a task force to advise on the necessary amendments and commissioning the DH to conduct a consultation with the sector. The proposed amendments mainly involves the adoption of terminologies and presentation styles used for CMMs in the 2020 edition of the Pharmacopoeia of the People's Republic of China, so as to standardise the Latin names of CMMs and the scientific names of plants and animals listed in Schedules 1 and 2. The amendments cover a total of 586 CMMs, requiring no addition or deletion of CMMs subject to regulatory control as listed in the existing Schedules. Overall speaking, participants in the sector consultation were generally supportive of the proposed amendments and implementation plan, in which the transitional measures were especially welcomed. The Government will make reference to the latest version of the Pharmacopoeia of the People's Republic of China when introducing the proposed amendments in the future to ensure that the content of the proposed amendments synchronises with the prevailing Mainland edition.

46. Besides, to streamline the approval procedures and provide facilitation for the sector, the CMCHK has proposed an amendment to Schedule 5 to the Ordinance to delegate the function of processing an application for change of address of premises specified in a CMs trader licence from the CMB under the CMCHK to the Chinese Medicines Traders Committee. Upon amendment to the Schedule, the approval procedures for such applications will align with that currently in force for new and renewal applications for the licence.

## **ADVICE SOUGHT**

47. Members are invited to note the latest progress of policy initiatives relating to the development of CM.

**Health Bureau  
Department of Health  
Hospital Authority  
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