

**Legislative Council  
Panel on Welfare Services**

**Report on the duty visit to  
Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area  
30 to 31 August 2023**



**Caring for the Elderly,  
Fostering Lasting  
Happiness**

---

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

---

<b>Chapter</b>		<b>Page</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1-3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Visit to Guangzhou</b>	<b>4-20</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Visit to Foshan</b>	<b>21-27</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Observations and recommendations</b>	<b>28-36</b>
	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>36</b>
	<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>Appendix 1 - Membership of the delegation of the Labour and Welfare Bureau</b>	
	<b>Appendix 2 - Itinerary of the duty visit to Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area</b>	

---

---

# Chapter 1: Introduction

---

---

## Purpose of the Report

1.1 The delegation of the Legislative Council (“Legco”) Panel on Welfare Services (“the WS Panel”), together with the delegation of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (“LWB”), conducted a duty visit to Mainland cities (i.e. including Guangzhou and Foshan) in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (“GBA”) from 30 to 31 August 2023<sup>1</sup> to learn about the latest developments in the provision of elderly and rehabilitation services in Mainland cities as well as the retirement needs of Hong Kong people residing in the Mainland. This report presents the highlights of the duty visit and observations of Members.

## Background and objectives of the visit

1.2 As the integrated development of GBA progresses, GBA cities such as Guangzhou and Foshan have gradually become the preferred retirement destinations for some Hong Kong people. Guangdong Province, in its 14th Five-Year Plan for Elderly Care, proposed exploring the “Bay Area Model” of cross-boundary elderly services. By deepening cooperation and exchanges among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, as well as supporting Hong Kong and Macao service providers to set up and operate elderly service organizations in Guangdong Province, it can help resolve problems such as the shortage of residential care places for the elderly and care workers in Hong Kong.

1.3 Furthermore, to promote cooperation in elderly services between Hong Kong and Guangdong, LWB signed the Memorandum of

---

<sup>1</sup> The delegation had originally planned to conduct a three-day duty visit to three Mainland cities in GBA, (i.e. Guangzhou, Zhaoqing and Foshan) from 30 August to 1 September, but with Super Typhoon “Saola” approaching the Guangdong coast, part of the visit programme was cancelled. These included the visits to the model ageing-in-place integrated service centre in Guangzhou and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Helping Hand Zhaoqing Home for the Elderly in Zhaoqing scheduled for 31 August, and to the Tianfu retirement community in Chancheng District in Foshan, scheduled for the afternoon of 1 September. The delegation returned to Hong Kong in advance on 31 August after completing the Guangzhou and Foshan itineraries.

Cooperation on Care for the Elderly (“MoC”) with the Department of Civil Affairs of Guangdong Province (“DCAGP”) at the end of May 2023. The WS Panel welcomed this move and considered it an important step forward. In addition to promoting the development of elderly services in Guangdong and Hong Kong and strengthening cooperation between the two places in elderly and rehabilitation care, MoC can also provide better service options for retired Hong Kong residents.

1.4 The objectives of the duty visit are: (a) to obtain first-hand information on the elderly and rehabilitation services in the Mainland as well as the needs of Hong Kong residents who retire there; (b) to exchange views with elderly and rehabilitation service providers in Mainland cities of GBA to learn about their challenges and practices in delivering such services; and (c) to explore opportunities with Mainland cities of GBA for collaboration in areas such as elderly care, rehabilitation services and social welfare.

1.5 At the meeting held on 7 July 2023, the House Committee of Legco endorsed the proposed duty visit by the WS Panel to Mainland cities of GBA.

## **Membership of the delegation**

1.6 The delegation of the WS Panel had a total of 13 Members. The Chairman of the WS Panel, Hon TANG Ka-piu, was the leader of the delegation, and other delegation members included:

### Panel members

Revd Canon Hon Peter Douglas KOON, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)

Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP

Hon Doreen KONG

Dr Hon TIK Chi-yuen, SBS, JP

Hon CHAU Siu-chung

Dr Hon David LAM

Hon LAM So-wai

Hon Kenneth LEUNG, JP

Hon CHAN Pui-leung

Hon Lillian KWOK

### Non-Panel Members

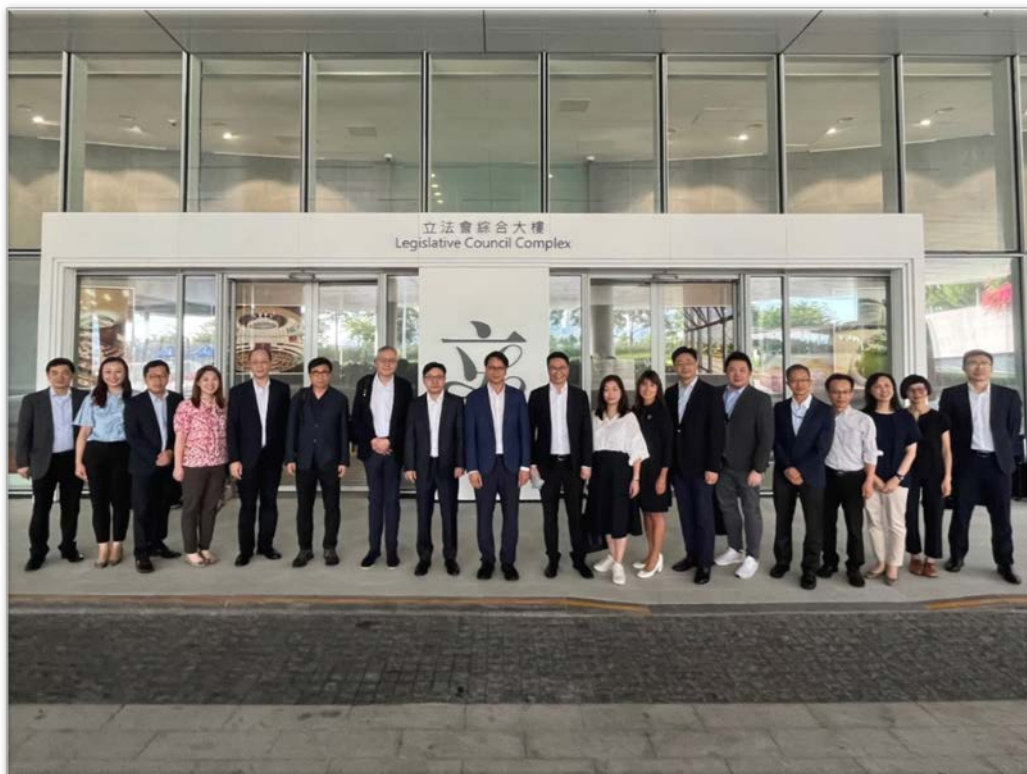
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP

Hon Carmen KAN

1.7 The delegation of LWB, led by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris SUN Yuk-han, comprised members as set out in **Appendix 1**. Through the joint visit, the HKSAR Government and the WS Panel can jointly explore the development direction of elderly services, enhance communication and cooperation, and promote experience sharing.

## Visit programme

1.8 The delegation visited two GBA cities, namely Guangzhou and Foshan, during the visit. Apart from meeting and exchanging views with staff of DCAGP and the relevant committees of Guangdong Province, leaders of various municipalities and retired Hong Kong residents in Clifford Estates, the delegation also visited the Clifford Elderly Care Centre; Haiyuehui , a project of the Guangzhou Yijing Health Care Service Co. Ltd, and the Shanqi Nursing Home Retirement Community in Shunde District of Foshan, so as to gain a deeper understanding of the elderly services in Mainland cities of GBA and the needs of Hong Kong people retiring there. The detailed visit programme is in **Appendix 2**.



The delegation of the LegCo WS Panel and the delegation of LWB depart from the LegCo Complex for the duty visit

---

# Chapter 2: Visit to Guangzhou

---

## Elderly care policy in Guangzhou

2.1 The permanent population of Guangzhou is 18.81 million, of which 2.13 million are aged 60 and above, accounting for 11.4% of the total population. In August 2021, the Guangzhou Municipal Government promulgated the **14th Five-Year Plan for the Construction of the Elderly Care Service System in Guangzhou Municipality** (“the 14th Five-Year Plan for Elderly Care in Guangzhou Municipality”), which proposed the key improvement to the basic elderly care service system to build an all-inclusive, multi-level, multi-pillar and multi-subject model for providing comprehensive elderly care in a major city, with the following features:

- (a) abundant supply (promoting the coordination between home and community institutions and **the combination of medical care and healthcare** to provide fundamental protection and inclusive services to ensure basic elderly care services for all);
- (b) a large platform (a **smart elderly care service platform** with the application of information technology, as well as information exchange, resource sharing and system integration in the field of elderly care services);
- (c) strong guarantees (guaranteeing elements such as service talent, capital, policy and land for venues);
- (d) all-round supervision (fostering the development of elderly care services in terms of safety, quality and standardization, and a comprehensive regulatory system); and
- (e) large-scale industries (meeting diversified needs and combining the advantages of various industries, such as the Chinese medicine industry, assistive device industry, smart elderly care industry, elderly health tourism industry, etc.)

2.2 Members learnt that the key development targets for 2025 set out in the 14th Five-Year Plan for Elderly Care in Guangzhou Municipality are more aggressive, including: (a) increasing the proportion of nursing beds in elderly care institutions<sup>2</sup> from 60% to 75% in 2020; (b) achieving a 100%

---

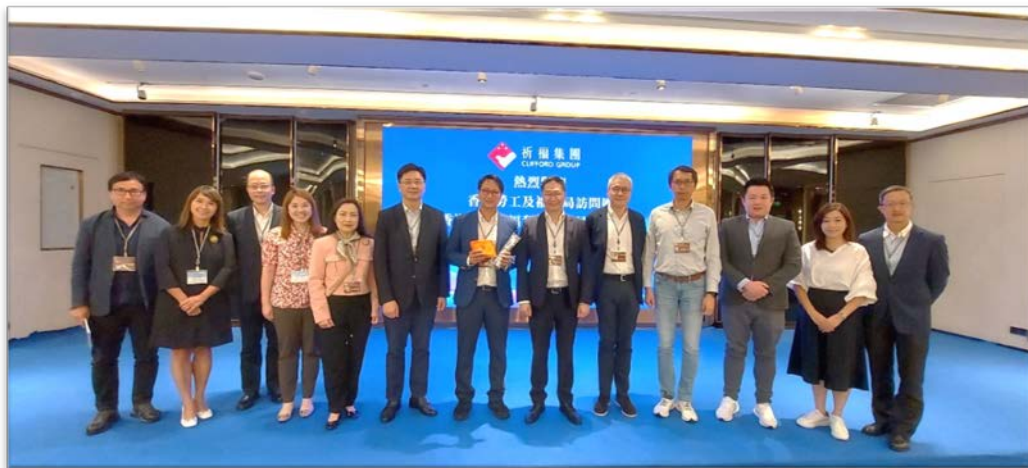
<sup>2</sup> In 2020, there were a total of 72 700 beds for the elderly in Guangzhou (including beds with integrated medical and elderly care and other beds), of which 75% were private beds.

coverage rate for long-term nursing insurance; and (c) achieving a 100% completion rate/coverage rate for elderly-friendly home renovation and family pension bed services for elderly people according to their wishes.

## **Meeting with Hong Kong retirees residing in Clifford Estates**

2.3 Upon arrival in Guangzhou, the delegation first visited Clifford Estates, developed by the Clifford Group and completed in 1991. It is reported that after 30 years of development, 200 000 people permanently reside in Clifford Estates, covering an overall planning area of about 14.5 sq km, mainly for retirement and holiday purposes. Members observe that Clifford Estates have comprehensive amenities, including pedestrian streets, schools, a hospital, other elderly care facilities, etc.

2.4 Accompanied by the Director of the Elderly Care Service Division (“ECSD”) of the Department of Civil Affairs of Guangdong Province (“DCAGP”), Ms ZHANG Dongxia, Deputy Director of ECSD, Mr FANG Xia, the Second-Grade Consultant, Ms XUAN Li (“ECSD staff”), the Vice Chairman of Clifford Group, Ms Wendy MAN, and the Vice Chairman of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions and the Executive Director of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions Greater Bay Area Community Services, Ms TSANG Chi-man, the delegation met with about 30 Hong Kong retirees residing in Clifford Estates.



The delegation arrives at Clifford Estates



Leader of the delegation, Hon TANG Ka-piu, delivers a speech at the meeting with Hong Kong retirees residing in Clifford Estates



Members chat with Hong Kong retirees residing in Clifford Estates to gain a better understanding of their lives there



2.5 During the meeting, Members had an in-depth discussion with Hong Kong retirees residing in Clifford Estates for about an hour. Members attentively listened to gain a thorough understanding of their experiences and needs in the Mainland, including the problems they encountered in getting medical care and elderly care, and the services they expected to receive. Members learnt that most Hong Kong retirees residing in the Mainland have lived there for a long time and are satisfied with the living environment and amenities. Members are pleased to note that elderly people are leading fulfilling lives in the Mainland while also understanding the challenges that they encounter in obtaining healthcare services and finding suitable elderly care facilities. Hong Kong retirees residing in the Mainland are satisfied with the living environment in the Mainland, but they hope that the HKSAR Government will enhance healthcare support measures, such as expanding the scope of application of Hong Kong's Health Care Vouchers, and provide more elderly care homes, specifically tailored to meet the needs of Hong Kong elderly people.



The delegation poses for a group photo after meeting with Hong Kong retirees residing in Clifford Estates



Hong Kong retirees share their handmade sesame rolls with the delegation

## Visit to Clifford Hospital and Clifford Elderly Care Centre

2.6 After meeting with the elderly, the delegation visited Clifford Hospital. Members learnt that Clifford Hospital is the first large-scale comprehensive “Grade 3A” integrated traditional Chinese medicine and Western medicine hospital in the country accredited by Joint Commission International (“JCI”)<sup>3</sup>. It is also the designated GBA healthcare institution under the measure of allowing designated healthcare institutions in GBA to use Hong Kong-registered drugs and medical devices. The hospital covers an area of nearly 300 000 sq m and provides various facilities such as a large and modernized out-patient department, in-patient department and first aid centre.

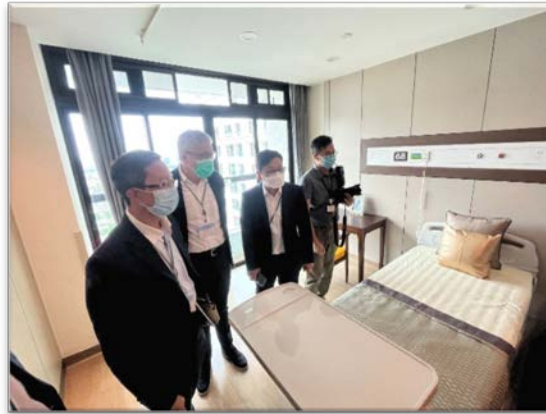


The delegation visits Clifford Hospital

---

<sup>3</sup> JCI is a leading accreditation body recognized by the World Health Organization for global hospital accreditation.

2.7 The delegation paid a specific visit to the Clifford Elderly Care Centre. Members learnt that the Elderly Care Centre is a government-supported, medically-run, hotel-style medical and elderly care service centre. Various services such as medical treatment, elderly care, rehabilitation and nursing care



are brought under one roof to **achieve in-depth integration of medical and elderly care, with the aim of providing holistic care services for the elderly.** The Centre offers eight main streams of services, namely, medical treatment and cure, rehabilitation and health maintenance, daily nursing care, daily living, nutrition and diet, spiritual entertainment, psychological services and featured healthcare, all of which are provided to enable the elderly to age healthily and enjoy their twilight years. Members toured the facilities of the Centre and listened to two retired Hong Kong elders sharing about their lives in the Centre.



Members visit the facilities at the Clifford Elderly Care Centre to understand the operation mode of integrated medical and elderly care



Retired Hong Kong elders residing in the Elderly Care Centre share with Members about their lives in the Mainland



The delegation tours the elderly care facilities

## Policy exchange with the Department of Civil Affairs of Guangdong Province

2.8 To foster exchange and cooperation in elderly care services between Guangdong and Hong Kong, the delegation met and exchanged views with DCAGP on 30 August. The seminar was hosted by the Deputy Director-General of DCAGP, Mr XIONG Song. Party Secretary of DCAGP, Mr DING Hongdu, also attended the seminar and delivered a speech. Led and coordinated by DCAGP, the delegation had exchange sessions with the heads of the relevant offices, such as the Provincial Development and Reform Commission, the Provincial Department of Human Resources and Social Security, the Provincial Health Commission, the Provincial State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission, the Provincial Medical Insurance Bureau, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the People's Government of Guangdong Province and the Provincial Disabled Persons' Federation ("the participants").



(Above) Members pose for a photo at DCAGP; (right) Members pose for a group photo with Party Secretary of DCAGP, Mr DING Hongdu



2.9 Members had an in-depth exchange with the participants on promoting the cooperation between Guangdong and Hong Kong in such areas as elderly care and medical insurance policies. Members learnt that Guangdong Province is working on the issuance of the Implementation Opinions on Promoting the Construction of Basic Elderly Care Service System, which specifies that basic elderly care services should cover all elderly people, and the key elements include, among others, material assistance, care services, social benefits and caring services. Emphasis is placed on life safety and long-term care services for the elderly. Members are of the view that the exchange has further enhanced mutual understanding in the development of social services, and has substantially promoted the cooperation between the two places in the area of social welfare.

2.10 The delegation of LWB advised that following the signing of MoC with DCAGP at the end of May to promote bilateral cooperation in elderly care, the exchange has further deepened the Bureau's understanding of the development and experience of elderly care services, which is conducive to promoting further cooperation between Guangdong and Hong Kong.



The delegation receives a briefing from DCAGP on elderly care policy



The delegation has an in-depth exchange with DCAGP



The delegation poses for a photo after meeting with DCAGP

## Visit to Yuexiu Haiyuehui (an integrated elderly care centre)

2.11 Accompanied by the staff of ECSD of DCAGP, the Second-level Inspector of the Guangzhou Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau, Ms YI Lihua, and the Director of the Elderly Care Service Department of the Guangzhou Municipal Civil Affairs Bureau, Ms GUAN Jiejun, the delegation visited Yuexiu Haiyuehui in Baiyun District of Guangzhou, which is a health and wellness project for the elderly, in the morning of 31 August.

2.12 The delegation notes that Haiyuehui is a health and wellness project operated in a public-private partnership mode. Based on the medical-and-elderly care integrated approach, the project aims to build an **integrated elderly care centre** with Guangzhou characteristics, which can serve as a pioneer in the country, a demonstration in the province and an advanced model in the municipality, as well as a window for training practitioners engaging in elderly care services and facilitating their exchanges with external parties. With a total construction floor area of over 7 000 sq m, the eight-storey elderly care centre provides 155 institutional beds and 30 day care beds. The monthly service fee starts from RMB 5,500. Haiyuehui provides 24-hour healthcare services for the elderly and is located in close proximity to Baiyun Branch of Guangdong Provincial Second Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, with which a green channel has been established.



The delegation poses for a photo at Haiyuehui



2.13 During the visit, Members received a briefing from the representatives of Haiyuehui on the various social and recreational activities designed by the designated social workers based on the interests and hobbies as well as the physical conditions of the elderly. Members learnt that a team of volunteers from Yuexiu Health and Wellness also regularly organizes a variety of activities for the elderly to enrich their daily lives. Members also visited its “Elderly Service Centre Platform” and learnt that it serves as **a centralized hub for various elderly facilities in the community**. Leveraging on an information portal, the e-platform coordinates the resources for elderly services and provides a wide range of services, which facilitate users to get the latest information on such services.



The delegation visits Haiyuehui

The delegation receives a briefing from the representatives of Haiyuehui on the various social and recreational activities for the elderly



The delegation appreciates the works of art created by the elderly



Members visit the various social and recreational facilities for the elderly



Members try out various elderly care equipment at Haiyuehui





Members chat with the elderly residing in Haiyuehui to gain a better understanding of their lives there



The delegation receives a briefing from the representatives of Haiyuehui on the daily activities of the elderly



Members visit the “Elderly Service Centre Platform”  
of Haiyuehui

---

## Chapter 3: Visit to Foshan

---

### Elderly care policy in Foshan

3.1 Foshan has a permanent population of 9.61 million, of which 1 million are aged 60 and above, representing 10.5% of the total population. In July 2023, the Foshan Municipal Government announced the launch of **five major initiatives** to further promote the construction of a tiered, categorized and diversified elderly service system, which will **facilitate the upgrading and improvement of elderly care services**. The five major initiatives include:

- (a) drafting the Regulations of Foshan Municipality on Elderly Care Services (Draft);
- (b) facilitating the synergistic development of the elderly care sector and industry, and effectively formulating a conceptual plan for the elderly care industrial park in Guangdong Province;
- (c) renovating a group of small and dilapidated public elderly care facilities, with the aim of ensuring that all public elderly care facilities in the city meet the star-level standards of elderly service providers in Guangdong Province by 2025;
- (d) enhancing home-based community care services for the elderly; and
- (e) setting up the Foshan Integrated Health and Wellness Services Centre as a technology-empowered, one-stop service provider in six areas, namely, information on elderly care services, demonstration of health and wellness practices, showcasing of family pension beds, as well as training, advisory support and promotion of elderly care services.

3.2 Members understand that there are currently a total of 96 elderly service providers in Foshan with 21 000 beds in institutional care. Under the Outline Development Plan for Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the National 14th Five-Year Plan, eight to nine key projects for the construction of public elderly care facilities are to be launched in Foshan with a total investment of approximately RMB 2.5 billion to RMB 3.2 billion, which will provide no less than 6 000 beds for the elderly in need.

## Visit to Shanqi Nursing Home Retirement Community

3.3 After leaving Guangzhou, the delegation immediately travelled to Foshan. Accompanied by the staff of ECSD of DCAGP, Director-General of the Bureau of Civil Affairs of Foshan City, Mr LAI Hongjian and Deputy Director-General of the Bureau of Civil Affairs of Foshan City, Mr LI Muquan, the delegation visited the Shanqi Nursing Home Retirement Community (“Shanqi Community”).

3.4 Shanqi Community is a non-profit, public welfare and charitable non-state elderly care project positioned as “government-led”, developed with “community donations” and run on “market operation” and “profit circular development”. The project is funded by donations from the De Qi Charity Foundation of the Guangdong Province, with an investment of more than RMB250 million for the first phase. The Community has a planned construction area of 110 000 sq m and will provide 1 500 beds. The first phase of the project has already commenced operation, providing 870 beds.



The delegation visits the Shanqi Nursing Home Retirement Community





Members observe the equipment and facilities in the Shanqi Nursing Home





Members try out the elderly care facilities

The delegation visits the memory care centre





The delegation receives a briefing from representatives of the Shanqi Nursing Home to gain an understanding of the Mainland's medical insurance



3.5 The delegation notes that, since its opening in November 2017, the Shanqi Community has been committed to establishing a **three-in-one integrated model of medical services and elderly care comprising institutional care, community care and home care**. It has also been accredited under the

Residential Aged Care Accreditation Scheme by the Hong Kong Association of Gerontology and as a five-star elderly care institution by the Guangdong Province. The Community is well equipped with medical facilities, including a rehabilitation centre, a memory care centre, a special care centre, a palliative care centre, an academy for the elderly and other service centres.

3.6 Members were impressed by the **memory care centre**, which provides a nostalgic, comfortable and safe environment for cognitively impaired elderly persons. The carers conduct various types of training with respect, care and empathy to **enhance elderly persons' cognitive abilities and physical functioning and improve their quality of life**. Members also learn that the **special care centre** has adopted Taiwan's **smart care system**, nursing and rehabilitation equipment and advanced nursing care technology, and admits elderly persons requiring catheter care and critical wound care to provide professional rehabilitation care services for severely disabled elderly persons. Members were informed that the monthly fee of the Shanqi Nursing Home starts from RMB4,000. At present, there are more than 700 elderly residents (including 23 Hong Kong people), with an average age of 84, in the Shanqi Community.

---

# Chapter 4: Observations and Recommendations

---

4.1 The two-day duty visit to GBA is the first joint visit to the Mainland by LWB of the HKSAR Government and the LegCo WS Panel, demonstrating the close cooperation and exchanges between officials and Members. During the visit, the delegation toured elderly projects implemented through public-private partnerships between the two places and private charities. There was also an exchange of views with operators of elderly care organizations to understand the challenges they faced in providing services. At the same time, Members had the opportunity to meet with retired Hong Kong people living in the Mainland to listen to their views and learn about their livelihoods there.

4.2 In addition, under the leadership and coordination of DCAGP, the delegation had the opportunity to hold an exchange seminar with the persons-in-charge of the relevant Mainland authorities. The exchange facilitated a deeper understanding between Guangdong Province and HKSAR regarding their respective developments in the area of welfare, resulting in substantial progress in cooperation. Members consider the visit fruitful and meaningful. Their observations and recommendations are detailed below.

## **Development of cross-boundary elderly care**

4.3 In April 2023, General Secretary XI Jinping paid an in-depth visit to Guangdong and gave GBA a new positioning as “a strategic fulcrum of the new development pattern, a demonstration zone of high-quality development, and a pioneer of Chinese modernization”, with a view to leading and promoting GBA as the most promising region in the world. Members note that cross-boundary elderly care has been further promoted and developed with the support of the State and the complementary policies introduced by the governments of Guangdong Province and HKSAR. Members consider that Guangdong and Hong Kong should strengthen cooperation in elderly services, so as to fully demonstrate the positive and proactive efforts of both places in implementing the State’s decisions and plans, and vigorously promote the integrated development of elderly services.

4.4 Members also hope that Guangdong and HKSAR will make concerted efforts to further the implementation of MoC, make use of the major platforms such as **Hengqin, Qianhai and Nansha to promote the integration of elderly care and medical services in these three regions**, and facilitate extensive exchanges and in-depth cooperation in the area of elderly services, with a view to building an exemplary model of cooperation in elderly services.

4.5 Members consider that **increasing the number of beds for the elderly is crucial** in facilitating the development of cross-boundary elderly care. Members are pleased to note that there are currently eight Hong Kong and Macao service providers in Guangdong Province operating elderly care organizations for elderly people from Hong Kong and Macao, including public and private elderly care organizations in nine municipalities (Guangzhou, Foshan, Zhaoqing, Shenzhen, Dongguan, Huizhou, Zhuhai, Zhongshan and Jiangmen) in the Pearl River Delta region, providing a total of 10 000 beds for the elderly. Members opine that this will help expand the scope and capacity of elderly services, with a view to providing Hong Kong elderly people with more high-quality options on retiring in the Mainland to meet their needs.

## **Transformation of the mode of elderly services**

4.6 Members have always been concerned about the issue of Hong Kong people moving north to spend their old age, and **suggest** that the SAR **Government should make reference to the “Continuing Care Retirement Communities”<sup>4</sup>** which have become mature in developed countries and have proliferated in the Mainland, so as to facilitate the transformation of the mode of elderly services in Hong Kong. During the visits to the retirement communities in Guangzhou and Foshan, Members observed that these two developments are located in areas with beautiful surroundings and good accessibility. They adopt **a service mode that integrates medical, rehabilitation and care services under the concept of integrated elderly services** (including day care, home care, respite, meal assistance, meal preparation, healthcare services), providing warm and

---

<sup>4</sup> Continuing Care Retirement Communities are usually located in peri-urban areas, 50 to 100 kilometres from the city centre, within an hour’s drive and easily accessible. These retirement communities provide security and safety services and feature extensive green spaces, landscaping, gardens and planting areas. They strive to provide a liveable and healthy environment for their residents by applying barrier-free design in individual residences, service areas and public spaces. These communities also offer a variety of amenities to help residents meet their daily needs.

caring services in a professional manner. These communities are committed to enhancing the functional capabilities of elderly residents and improving their quality of life in their twilight years. After exchanging views with the residents of these retirement communities, Members found the fees charged by these retirement communities reasonable as compared to those charged by elderly facilities of a similar standard in Hong Kong. The elderly expressed their satisfaction in being able to reside in a comfortable and spacious environment, while enjoying their twilight years at a reasonable cost.

4.7 Members note that with effect from 28 July 2023, the Social Welfare Department (“SWD”) has relaxed the eligibility criteria of the Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong (“the Scheme”) to allow private organizations in Hong Kong with experience in providing subsidized residential care services for the elderly and a good track record to provide elderly services in the Mainland. Members hope that this will attract more quality Hong Kong operators to participate in the provision of elderly services in the Mainland, thereby promoting the sustainable development of the elderly care industry in both places. Members are concerned about the **current unsatisfactory occupancy rate of the Scheme**,<sup>5</sup> and **urge the SAR Government to review various factors that may discourage eligible elderly people from joining the Scheme**, such as the requirement for Hong Kong elderly people who are public rental housing (“PRH”) tenants or family members of the PRH tenancies to surrender their PRH units or delete their PRH names from the PRH tenancies upon admission to residential care homes for the elderly (“RCHEs”) in the Mainland.

4.8 Members also suggest that the SAR Government should leverage the concept of **GBA to set up “retirement villages” in the Mainland**, allowing eligible citizens to apply for residency in these facilities, and implement relevant measures, such as a pilot scheme for short-term stays in RCHEs so that elderly people who are not accustomed to living in the Mainland can resume their waiting position on the Central Waiting List, and family-friendly measures, i.e. providing hostels near RCHEs for family members to spend more time with the residents, with a view to encouraging and facilitating elderly people to reside in the Mainland.

---

5 Between 2014 and August 2022, a total of 282 Hong Kong elderly people had joined the Scheme, of whom 248 lived in RCHEs in Shenzhen and 34 in RCHEs in Zhaoqing.



4.9 To encourage retirement in the Mainland, Members **suggest** that the SAR Government should **promote the accreditation of Mainland retirement communities in Hong Kong**. At the same time, the SAR Government may **collaborate with commercial insurance companies to introduce retirement products**, so that people can move into high-end retirement communities in GBA after purchasing such products for a certain period of time. This will not only alleviate the financial burden of the SAR Government, but also provide Hong Kong people with a wide range of retirement options.

## **Smart elderly care**

4.10 Members observe that the integrated elderly service centre in Guangzhou vigorously advocates the concept of integrating community, home and institutional care for the elderly, promotes the holistic integration of a variety of services provided by individuals, families, communities and institutions, and proactively presses ahead with smart elderly care by making full use of intelligent means. In terms of rehabilitation services, the Shanqi Nursing Home in Foshan has introduced a smart elderly care system to enhance the functional capabilities of the elderly residents and improve their quality of life in their twilight years.

4.11 Members **suggest** that the SAR Government should **support RCHEs and other welfare organizations to improve the quality of life of elderly people through the application of gerontechnology**, while alleviating the pressure on carers and healthcare workers. Members also expressed concern about the **Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care** (“I&T Fund”) established by the SAR Government at the end of 2018, which provides subsidies to eligible elderly and rehabilitation service units to procure, rent and try out technology products. Given that many elderly people wish to improve their quality of life and personal health through gerontechnology products to achieve ageing in place, Members urge the SAR Government to **introduce gerontechnology vouchers under the I&T Fund**, allowing elderly people to apply for the Fund and procure suitable gerontechnology products for home use to enhance their quality of life and health while aging in place. Members also suggest **providing additional community-level resources and collaborating with local organizations to promote information technology (“IT”) literacy among the elderly**, enabling them to acquire the necessary skills for utilizing IT effectively. At the same time, Members also suggest that the SAR Government should explore the **effective utilization of big data on elderly people** to enhance the **planning and management of elderly services**, thereby improving the quality and efficiency of such services.

## Enhancing welfare benefits

4.12 According to the information of the Census and Statistics Department, as at mid-2022, there were about 529 500 Hong Kong residents usually staying in Guangdong Province, with about 17% (about 89 100) of them being persons aged 65 or above. At present, the SAR Government is adopting various measures to assist Hong Kong elderly people who choose to retire in Mainland cities of GBA. SWD purchases services from two Hong Kong-operated RCHEs located in Shenzhen and Zhaoqing under the Scheme. Elderly people waitlisted for subsidized care-and-attention places and intending to retire in the Mainland may join the Scheme. SWD fully subsidizes the home fees of elderly people. To facilitate elderly people to retire in the Mainland, SWD will extend the Scheme to cover other RCHEs in Mainland cities of GBA in the second half of 2023. Considering that many Hong Kong elderly people have retired in places such as Beijing, Hainan, Guangxi, Shanghai, Suzhou and Zhejiang, Members suggest that the SAR Government should **expand the Scheme to cover other provinces and municipalities**, and provide Social Security Allowance to Hong Kong elderly people residing in these places or other provinces.

4.13 The SAR Government launched the Portable Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (“Portable CSSA”) Scheme in 1997 and extended it to Fujian Province in 2005. At present, elderly people who have been in receipt of CSSA continuously for not less than 12 months and choose to settle in Guangdong and Fujian may join the Portable CSSA Scheme, and continue to receive monthly standard rates<sup>6</sup> and annual long-term supplement.<sup>7</sup> As Mainland cities have already embraced technology and electronic platforms to enhance elderly services, Members suggest implementing measures **to facilitate Hong Kong elderly people to age in place in the Mainland. These measures include enabling social security payments to be made electronically to the elderly people, assisting them in applying for various local elderly services and concessions available to them.**

---

<sup>6</sup> At present, the average amount of CSSA payable to an elderly singleton is \$7,809 per month.

<sup>7</sup> An annual long-term supplement is paid to elderly people who have been receiving assistance continuously for more than 12 months for the replacement of household and durable goods.

## Enhancing ancillary medical services

### Portability of drugs

4.14 While cross-boundary elderly services can help address the shortage of RCHE beds in Hong Kong, Members are concerned that Hong Kong people still face the challenge of seeking medical treatment in the Mainland.<sup>8</sup> If the cross-boundary elderly care scheme is extended to cover more GBA cities, the portability of drugs will become an issue when Hong Kong elderly people need to take prescription drugs from Hong Kong while retiring in the Mainland. In this connection, Members **suggest that the Hospital Authority should purchase corresponding services in the cities of GBA** so as to alleviate the financial pressure of Hong Kong elderly people seeking medical treatment in the Mainland. At the same time, they suggest that the SAR Government should collaborate with the Mainland medical authorities to **explore the establishment of a mechanism for sharing medical records between the two places**, so as to facilitate Hong Kong elderly people retiring in the Mainland to receive appropriate medical treatment and minimize the inconvenience of travelling between the two places.

### Extending the coverage of Elderly Health Care Voucher

4.15 To provide convenience to the eligible Hong Kong elderly people residing in Shenzhen or nearby areas, the SAR Government has launched the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital (“HKU-SZH”) pilot scheme since 2015, which was later regularized in June 2019. This has allowed the elderly people to use the elderly health care vouchers (“EHCVs”) to pay for the fees of designated outpatient healthcare services received at HKU-SZH, including preventive care, treatments and rehabilitation services. Starting from April 2023, the coverage of the EHCV Scheme at HKU-SZH has been further extended to cover the Huawei Community Health Service Center set up by HKU-SZH, thereby offering eligible Hong Kong elderly people residing in Shenzhen an additional service point where they can use EHCVs to obtain relevant medical services locally.

4.16 After in-depth discussions with retired Hong Kong residents in the Mainland, Members understand that elderly people would like to have

---

<sup>8</sup> According to “the Measure of using Hong Kong-registered drugs and medical devices used in Hong Kong public hospitals in GBA”, as at April 2023, 23 drugs and 13 medical devices have been allowed to be used in designated hospitals in GBA. For details, please refer to the website of the Department of Health at <https://www.mdd.gov.hk/en/whats-new/measure-of-using-hk-registered-drugs/index.html>.

more comprehensive and reliable medical support. In light of public hospitals in Hong Kong benefiting from substantial subsidies, enabling them to offer lower fees, and considering that individuals aged 75 or above receiving the Old Age Living Allowance are granted waiver of medical fees at public clinics or hospitals in Hong Kong, including the Accident and Emergency Departments, Members are of the view that elderly people will choose to return to their place of origin for medical treatment if they cannot enjoy these medical benefits across the boundary. In this connection, Members suggest that the SAR Government should **expand the coverage of EHCVs to include in-patient services, day surgeries, and other relevant healthcare services; extend the scope of EHCV application to Grade 3A hospitals and clinics in Guangdong Province; and subsidize Hong Kong people to utilize EHCVs for obtaining medical insurance in the Mainland.** Following the expansion of coverage and scope of application of EHCVs, the SAR Government should consider **increasing the amount of EHCVs** to ensure that a greater number of elderly people can benefit from these services.

#### Launch of medical insurance in GBA

4.17 During the visit to the Shanqi Nursing Home, Members learnt about the essential healthcare services (including passive rehabilitation training, sensory stimulation training, tube removal training, swallowing training and the wound care services for wounds of level 3 or above) provided by RCHEs to improve the functional capabilities of the elderly residents. Members consider that as **medical standards in the Mainland continue to advance, Hong Kong elderly people are gradually becoming more aware of and receptive to these services.** Members suggest that the SAR Government should **further enhance the healthcare support programmes, particularly focusing on the medical insurance schemes for GBA.**

4.18 Members note that in January 2020, the Central Government implemented the Interim Measures for Participation in Social Insurance by Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Residents in the Mainland.<sup>9</sup> Members are

---

<sup>9</sup> According to the Interim Measures, Hong Kong residents who have employment in the Mainland as well as those living in the Mainland without employment (including employees, self-employed persons and non-employed Hong Kong residents living there) may participate in social insurance in the Mainland in accordance with relevant requirements. They can enjoy corresponding social insurance benefits when certain eligibility requirements are met. For details, please refer the website of the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme Authority at <https://www.mpfa.org.hk/en/info-centre/social-insurance>

concerned that while allowing Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan residents to enjoy Mainland's medical insurance benefits is an important initiative to encourage Hong Kong and Macao residents to seek medical consultation in the Mainland, Hong Kong people are still required to pay for some of the medicines and medical expenses out of their own pockets as Mainland's medical insurance can only cover part of the medical expenses, and certain treatment items are not covered by medical insurance. This situation differs from the free medical consultation that Hong Kong and Macao residents receive in their respective places of origin.

4.19 Members consider that there is currently a lack of **dedicated GBA medical insurance plans** in Hong Kong, and that elderly people who intend to retire in the Mainland can only take out insurance plans that offer wider coverage at a higher cost. In this connection, they **suggest** that the Administration should **support the industry in developing insurance products** that specifically cover high-quality healthcare institutions in GBA, so as to lower the cost and enhance the overall effectiveness of the insurance scheme, ultimately benefiting the elderly people seeking cross-boundary healthcare services.

#### Cross-boundary ambulance service

4.20 Members are concerned about the transfer of Hong Kong people from the Mainland to Hong Kong for medical treatment. At present, many grass-roots elderly people lack medical insurance. To minimize the expenses associated with seeking medical treatment during emergency situations, they are often reluctant to visit hospitals in Mainland cities of GBA. Instead, they prefer returning to Hong Kong by ambulance for medical treatment. Members note the existence of a green channel for Hong Kong elderly people in the Mainland with serious medical needs. However, Members express dissatisfaction with the current requirement for these individuals to board ambulances at the boundary control points, as it presents logistical difficulties and inconveniences. This issue involves not only the relevant Mainland authorities or the Health Bureau of Hong Kong, but also the Customs and Excise Department, the Immigration Department, the Fire Services Department and the Transport Department of Hong Kong. Members urge the SAR Government to **expeditiously address the issue of allowing Hong Kong ambulances' direct entry into the Mainland and facilitating the operation of Mainland ambulances in Hong Kong.**

## Manpower training

4.21 The HKSAR Government introduced the Special Scheme to Import Care Workers for Residential Care Homes in the second quarter of 2023 to address the acute manpower shortage. Recognizing that Haiyuehui is a learning and training ground for elderly service practitioners, as well as a window for external exchanges on elderly services, Members suggest that Hong Kong can **collaborate with Haiyuehui to train suitable professionals** not only for Hong Kong, but also for the entire GBA in the future, **so as to retain talents and attract young people to join the sector.**

## Conclusions

4.22 The visit was highly productive, as it involves the observation of the elderly and rehabilitation services in Mainland cities of GBA, along with engaging in meetings and exchanges with local government representatives and service providers. This experience allows for leveraging the advantages of GBA to strengthen collaboration between the two places, which can expand the scope and capacity of elderly services, and provide Hong Kong elderly people with high-quality retirement options in the Mainland, thereby meeting their elderly care needs.

4.23 The joint delegation proved to be a valuable opportunity for Members and officials to engage in constructive discussions, aiming to foster consensus on the development of the elderly care industry. Despite the cancellation of certain parts of the visit programme due to the typhoon, Members anticipate another opportunity in the near future to engage in joint visits and collaborative efforts. This ongoing collaboration seeks to achieve greater benefits for people.

## Acknowledgements

The successful completion of this enriching duty visit would not have been possible without the unwavering support of DCAGP, staff of the receiving provinces and municipalities in the Mainland and Mainland Consultation Services Centre of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions. Members express their deep appreciation for the warm hospitality and detailed briefings on the facilities and residents' livelihoods provided by the Mainland elderly care organizations. The delegation also has the opportunity to observe a number of nursing and rehabilitation facilities, as well as smart care systems, adding immense value to the visit. Members would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to the relevant Mainland authorities and receiving units for their invaluable contributions.

Furthermore, Members would like to extend their sincere gratitude to the delegation of LWB for their valuable advice on the visit programme and proactive liaison with the organizations to be visited, enabling meaningful exchanges between Members and the service providers, as well as Hong Kong retirees residing in the Mainland.

**Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services**

**Duty visit to Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area  
from 30 to 31 August 2023**

**Membership of the delegation of the  
Labour and Welfare Bureau**

Labour and Welfare Bureau

Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Mr Chris SUN Yuk-han

Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2

Mr CHONG Wing-wun

Administrative Assistant to Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Mr Daniel FONG Siu-wai

Press Secretary to Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Mr Jonathan CHONG Tze-wai

Political Assistant to Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Miss Sammi FU Hiu-lam

Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Special Duties)

Miss Judith YU Wing-wa

Social Welfare Department

Assistant Director (Elderly)

Ms Jenny YAN Lai-ming

Chief Social Work Officer (Elderly)2

Miss WAN Pui-kuen

Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong  
Kong Special Administrative Region

Deputy Director, Department of Social Affairs

Mr CHAN Tsz-ming

Section Chief, Department of Social Affairs

Mr ZOU Jian



## Appendix 2

<b>30 August (Wednesday)</b>	
<b>Time</b>	<b>Itinerary</b>
Morning	Travel to Guangzhou
	Meet with Hong Kong residents retiring in the Clifford Estates  Visit the Clifford Elderly Care Centre in Clifford Hospital
Afternoon	Exchange with the Department of Civil Affairs of Guangdong Province
Evening	Overnight stay in Guangzhou

<b>31 August (Thursday)</b>	
<b>Time</b>	<b>Itinerary</b>
Morning	Visit Guangzhou's Yuexiu Haiyuehui
Afternoon	Travel to Foshan
	Visit the Shanqi Nursing Home in Shunde District of Foshan
	Return to Hong Kong