

Health and Social Welfare

The Government's long-term policy objectives are to enhance the quality of medical services, and improve medical and health care facilities, thus safeguarding and improving public health. The health departments have been continually accelerating the establishment of different kinds of facilities, improving the medical and health systems, raising the level of medical services, and increasing health care resources at the community level.

In the scope of social service, it is the policy of the Government to strengthen the provision of community services, focus on securing and improving people's standard of living, helping the underprivileged in the community, and ensuring family harmony and social inclusiveness. The Government is committed to helping individuals, families and members of vulnerable groups in distress, enabling them to reassume their social functions, enhance their living skills and acquire a better quality of life.

Public Health

Macao's standard of public health care is comparable to that of developed countries and regions. According to Health Bureau statistics for 2022, the ratio of doctors to residents was 2.9 per thousand residents; that of nurses to residents was 4.3 per thousand residents; and that of hospital beds to residents was 2.6 per thousand residents. The general mortality rate in 2022 was 4.4 per thousand inhabitants, while the mortality rate for infants was 0.9 per thousand live births. The average life expectancies for men and women in Macao were 80.9 and 86.7 years (2019-2022), respectively, which are among the highest life expectancies for any country or territory.

According to the ICD-10-CM classification system (International Classification of Disease, Tenth Edition, Clinical Modification), malignant tumours were the main cause of death in Macao, while circulatory diseases and respiratory diseases ranked second and third, respectively. In 2022, these three categories accounted for 32.8 percent, 29.3 percent and 13.8 percent, respectively, of all deaths during the year.

Health Bureau

The main functions of the Health Bureau are to coordinate health-related activities of public and private institutions, and to protect public health through specialist medical and health services and community health care services, disease prevention measures and hygiene promotion work.

Medical Benefits

The Government devotes considerable resources to medical and health care to optimise medical services and various health care facilities. In 2022, total expenditure on medical and health services was about 9.72 billion patacas, representing an increase of 8.89 percent over the 2021 figure.

The Government takes great responsibility for public health, so Macao residents can enjoy a comprehensive coverage of medical benefits. All legal residents of Macao, regardless of their

Health and Social Welfare age or occupation, are entitled to free services at Health Centres and supplementary check ups at Conde S. Januario Hospital by referral from Health Centres, while non-residents are required to pay for such services according to rates established by the Health Bureau. Services provided by the Conde S. Januario Hospital are chargeable except for people specified by the Government, but Macao residents may enjoy a waiver of 30 percent of the charges. Conde S. Januario Hospital also provides assistance to Macao residents who have financial difficulties.

Additionally, there are medical entities subsidised by the Government and other institutions, such as Kiang Wu Hospital, the Workers' Clinic and Tung Sin Tong Clinics, as well as various private clinics and laboratories.

Specialist Medical and Health Services

Conde S. Januario Hospital is a modern medical institution with advanced and comprehensive facilities. The hospital has received international accreditation for its management. It has 29 specialist departments providing 79 types of specialist outpatient services, including specialist outpatient, specialist medical examination and treatment outpatient services, and consultations and lectures organised by the outpatient department.

The specialist medical services provided by Conde S. Januario Hospital and the community medical services provided by various health centres in Macao are fully coordinated through two-way referrals, to provide appropriate medical services to the public. The hospital also provides 24-hour emergency medical services, including specialists on rotating rosters, surgeries and specialist in-patient services.

The hospital has also established the Island Emergency Station, the Community Rehabilitation Ward, the Dementia Medical Centre, the Children's Integrated Assessment Centre, and the Emergency Service Building, to optimise medical services and the consultation environment.

According to statistics provided by the Health Bureau, in 2022 Conde S. Januario Hospital had 452 doctors, 1,134 nurses and 1,036 beds (920 inpatient beds and 116 outpatient beds). It received 484,808 outpatients and 231,070 emergency cases, and 26,454 inpatient cases. The bed occupancy rate was 75.9 percent, and patients stayed in the hospital for an average of 11.6 days. The daytime hospital treated 70,375 patients, surgical operations were performed on 8,651 occasions, and 1,900 women gave birth in the hospital. A total of 6,874,368 diagnoses and medical examinations were conducted.

Community Health Care Services

To realise the objective of "Health for All" advocated by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Health Bureau has established Health Centres throughout the territory. The establishment of a community health care services network, with health centres as its operational units, provides Macao people with easy access to community health care services in their own neighbourhoods.

There are nine health centres and two health stations offering adult health care, child health care, oral health care and fillings, school health care, pre-natal health care, women's health care,

Chinese medicine and acupuncture, psychological health care, tobacco quitting consultations, nutrition consultations, cervical cancer and colorectal cancer screening, health screening and immunisation services.

At the end of 2022, there were 170 doctors (including general practitioners, dentists and Chinese medicine practitioners) and 265 nurses providing community health care services to 758,904 outpatients. The most sought-after outpatient services were adult health care, non-scheduled consultations, and Chinese medicine and acupuncture, which accounted for 43.4 percent, 24.63 percent and 8.31 percent, respectively, of total outpatient visits to the community health care services.

Development of Traditional Chinese Medicine Services

The Health Bureau has always upheld the concept of “Integrating traditional Chinese and Western medicine”, to leverage the unique characteristics and advantages of traditional Chinese medicine, strengthen the development of traditional Chinese medicine services, and provide appropriate medical services to residents. In 2022, the Health Bureau established the Department of Traditional Chinese Medicine Service Development, to popularise the application of traditional Chinese medicine services in the community, promote talent cultivation and formulate service quality standards to facilitate the comprehensive development of traditional Chinese medicine services. Through active popular science education on traditional Chinese medicine, the department disseminates information on health care, disease prevention and treatment to residents through various means, achieving the goal of enhancing residents’ health.

Cooperation with Non-profit-making Medical Institutions

The Government cooperates with many non-profit-making medical institutions to provide various services to residents including specialist health care (inpatient, emergency and cardiac surgery), Chinese medicine and dental care, rehabilitation, home care, cervical cancer screening, colorectal cancer screening and psychological therapy. It also provides education programmes on AIDS prevention, mental health and promotion of tobacco-free lifestyles.

Since 2009, the Government has implemented a medical subsidy scheme, distributing health care vouchers to every Macao permanent resident on an annual basis to enhance public health consciousness and subsidise medical expenses, as well as foster development of private medical units. In 2018, the Government issued electronic vouchers. Through application of big data, the Government is able to better analyse and review the usage of health care vouchers, thereby enhancing the development of smart health care.

Public Hygiene and Disease Prevention

Following World Health Organisation guidelines, the Health Bureau continues to conduct regular disease monitoring; enhance prevention of and responses to Covid-19, dengue fever, enteroviruses and outbreaks of seasonal influenza; strengthen education on AIDS screening and prevention, and intervention measures for tuberculosis high-risk groups; refine health and disease prevention systems at border checkpoints; maintain cooperation with neighbouring regions; and optimise

regional collaboration mechanisms.

Through the Healthy City Committee and the Commission for the Prevention and Control of Chronic Diseases, the Government continues to work on prevention of chronic diseases and advocate healthy lifestyles by organising health promotion activities in schools, promoting healthy buildings, and implementing tobacco control.

In 2022, there were a total of 7,537 cases of infectious diseases requiring mandatory declaration, the top three of which were influenza (2,888 cases), coronavirus-related severe respiratory infections (2,533 cases) and enteroviruses (587 cases). There were 39 human immunodeficiency virus infections, 14 cases of AIDS, one case of legionnaires disease and 11 cases of scrub typhus. There were no cases of rubella, dengue fever, pertussis, Avian influenza A (H7N9), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS) or Ebola virus.

The MSAR's vaccination programme was similar to that of advanced countries, with a wide coverage of residents and more comprehensive types of vaccines than neighbouring regions. In addition, in order to minimise any outbreak of influenza and reduce the risk of severe and fatal cases, the Health Bureau provided free influenza vaccinations for high-risk people, and opened free vaccinations to all other Macao residents once vaccination of priority groups was essentially complete, allowing more residents to be vaccinated before the peak season. As of 31 December 2022, the Health Bureau's 2022-2023 Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Program had provided 123,044 people with free influenza vaccinations.

To ensure public health, the Public Health Laboratory conducts chemical and microorganism tests for food safety, water quality, medicine, cigarettes, and clinical samples, as well as diagnostic services for some infectious diseases. In 2022, it tested 785,783 samples, and conducted a total of 983,107 tests.

Smoking Control

Law No. 5/2011 – “Law of Smoking Prevention and Control” – came into effect on 1 January 2012. Through various channels, including legislation, law enforcement, education, promotion and encouraging quitting of smoking, the Health Bureau implemented smoking control in phases. With effect from 5 December 2022, the Law No. 5/2011 – Law on Smoking Prevention and Control, amended by Law No. 13/2022, prohibits the manufacturing, distribution, sale, import and export of electronic cigarettes and tobacco products intended for oral or nasal consumption, including the prohibition of carrying such products out of and into Macao.

In 2022, the law enforcement team patrolled 240,720 establishments, 34,985 (12.7 percent decrease) less than in 2021; and there were 1,584 prosecutions, including 1,564 cases of violating the smoking ban, 11 cases of illicit labelling of tobacco products, seven cases of shelf sales of tobacco products and two cases of illegal selling of e-cigarettes. In 2022, 1,344 hotline calls were received, including 540 enquiries, 748 complaints and 124 opinions.

Blood Collection

Macao adopts a voluntary, no rewards and anonymous blood donation policy. The Blood Transfusion

Centre is responsible for promoting non-remunerated blood donation and blood collection to provide adequate amounts of safe blood / blood composition and blood services to patients in need in Macao, and a consultation service for immunohaematology to hospitals. In 2022, a total of 14,170 residents registered as blood donors, and the centre collected 18,214 units of blood and prepared 42,243 units of blood components for 3,554 patients. Professional inspections and related consultation services were provided to 176 cases involving non-common blood types referred by hospitals.

Health Care Specialists and Establishments

In 2022, there were 6,787 health care professional licensees, 449 health care establishments and three centres registered under the Health Bureau, with a total of 7,239 issuances of private health care licences, representing an increase of 64.86 percent as compared to the figure in 2021.

Among the licences issued, there was a substantial increase in the number of licenses issued for nurses and doctors, rising by 1,616 and 777 licences, respectively. In addition, 22 new health care establishments were added.

Institute for Pharmaceutical Supervision and Administration

Established on 1 January, 2022, the Institute for Pharmaceutical Supervision and Administration is responsible for studying, coordinating and implementing policies regarding drug supervision and administration in the MSAR, especially through managing pharmaceutical activities including Chinese medicine and drug registration, professional pharmacy activities, registration of minor medical devices, and the management of drug and related product advertising activities.

Pharmaceutical Approval

As of December 2022, there were 34,682 western medicines circulating in Macao, including 11,187 over-the-counter medicines, 21,510 prescription medicines and 1,985 medicines for hospital use only. There were also 3,792 traditional Chinese medicines and 274 natural medicines circulating in Macao.

In accordance with the Law on Pharmaceutical Activities in the Field of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the Registration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (Chinese Medicine Law), which came into effect in 2022, the Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau formulated and announced 25 detailed technical regulations covering aspects including clinical trials, registration of traditional Chinese medicines, importation, manufacturing, circulation, distribution, supply, and usage of Chinese patent medicine products. The Chinese Patent Medicine Evaluation Expert Advisory Committee was established in June 2022, in accordance with the law. Its role is to provide professional opinions on the registration, quality, efficacy, and safety of traditional Chinese medicines in Macao.

Pharmaceutical Establishments

In accordance with the implementation of the Chinese Medicine Law, the Pharmaceutical

Administration Bureau has established a one-stop licensing and temporary licensing system, to handle applications for licences to import and export Chinese medicines for wholesale, and licences for Chinese herbal stores. The bureau also established a committee for reviewing plans and inspections related to Chinese medicines, in accordance with the law.

As of December 2022, the pharmaceutical establishments with licences issued by the Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau included 294 pharmaceutical stores, 129 Chinese herbal stores, 23 pharmaceutical dealers, 161 import and export wholesale stores, three Western pharmaceutical factories and six Chinese medicine pharmaceutical factories. Among these, two Western pharmaceutical factories and one Chinese medicine pharmaceutical factory (granule production line) comply with the Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) for Pharmaceutical Products.

Regulation of the Pharmaceutical Market

The Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau continues monitoring compliance with pharmaceutical regulations in the industry, through routine and impromptu inspections. Inspectors check imported drugs and products arriving at Macao's ports on a daily basis, and conduct regular inspections of pharmaceutical establishments to ensure that facilities, equipment, drug storage, sales and employees comply with regulations. In 2022, there were 3,936 port inspections, 2,813 inspections of pharmaceutical establishments, and 169 inspections of non-pharmaceutical establishments. Through strict regulation of the pharmaceutical market, the industry is encouraged to operate legally, boosting the confidence of residents and tourists in the Macao pharmaceutical market and promoting the healthy development of the pharmaceutical industry.

Regulation of Pharmaceutical Advertisements

The Pharmaceutical Administration Bureau processes applications to advertise medicines and products with claimed health benefits strictly according to the law. In 2022, a total of 413 advertising applications were approved, including 246 exhibition advertisements, 81 medicine advertisements and 86 advertisements for products with claimed health benefits.

Pharmaceutical Professionals

There are 834 licensed pharmacists, 17 licensed Chinese medicine practitioners, and 346 pharmacy technician assistants in Macao. In September 2022, the Professional Card function was launched on the "Macao One Account" platform, allowing pharmaceutical professionals to link their licences to their account.

Kiang Wu Hospital

Kiang Wu Hospital is a non-governmental medical and health institution administered by the Kiang Wu Hospital Charitable Association of Macao. Established in 1871, it has a 152-year history. It is a charitable hospital founded and managed by Chinese people with the principles of running

the hospital diligently and frugally, providing treatments with a caring heart, treating people with courtesy and putting patients first. Kiang Wu Hospital has developed into a modern general hospital that integrates treatment, prevention, teaching and research; and it is currently implementing a modern information management system in phases. In 2022, the hospital had 2,142 staff: 393 doctors, 630 nurses, 169 technical professionals and 950 other employees.

Kiang Wu Hospital has the following departments: Emergency, Outpatient, Inpatient, an Intensive Care Unit (ICU/CCU), Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Special Care Baby Unit (SBU), Breast Health Centre, Endoscopy Centre, Plastic Surgery Centre, Physical and Mental Health Centre, and Assisted Reproductive Centre.

The hospital's clinical services also cover medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, emergency, otorhinolaryngology, head and neck surgery, ophthalmology, dermatology, stomatology, rehabilitation, Chinese medicine, family medicine, integrated physical examination, oncology and anaesthesiology. In addition, the hospital has supporting departments dedicated to various areas including medical imaging, pharmacy, pathology and general examination. The Dr Henry Y. T. Fok Specialist Medical Centre was completed and commenced operation in August 2009 to offer various specialty outpatient services to the public.

Kiang Wu Hospital has four outpatient departments and two emergency departments, on the Macao Peninsula and Taipa, respectively. During 2022, its emergency and outpatient departments treated over 1,366,445 patients, an average of 4,254 each day. Its emergency department and outpatient department on the Macao peninsula treated over 1,218,777 patients during 2022, an average of 3,782 per day; the Taipa Medical Centre received patients seeking emergency and outpatient services on 147,668 occasions, an average of 472 patients per day. A total of 28,388 inpatients were discharged from the hospital during the year.

University Hospital

The University Hospital, an institution under the Macau University of Science and Technology (MUST) Foundation, was formerly the Chinese medicine clinic of the MUST. In March 2006, the University Hospital was formerly established through the approval of the Health Bureau of the MSAR, with western medicine being integrated with the original Chinese medicine service, further enhancing the scope of medical services. Now the University Hospital has developed into a modern integrated hospital incorporating the strengths of both Chinese and western medicines, and serves as the clinical and teaching base for the Faculty of Chinese Medicine and the Faculty of Medicine of the MUST, making it the only university-supported hospital in Macao.

The hospital comprises various specialties of western and Chinese medicines, providing general outpatient services as well as comprehensive medical services that include integrated tumour treatment, medical beauty and clinical genetics. The hospital also features technology-intensive facilities that include interventional catheterisation and surgery rooms, as well as various service centres including International Medical Service, Specialist Centre of Chinese Medicine Faculty, Executive Health Management Centre, Integrated Rehabilitation Service Centre, Medical Imaging Diagnostic Centre, Clinical Laboratory Diagnostic Centre, Endoscopy Centre, haemodialysis centre, and Medical Cosmetology Centre.

The hospital's inpatient department has 60 beds, and an intensive care unit (ICU). The haemodialysis centre has 48 beds.

Environmental Hygiene

One of the major tasks of the Municipal Affairs Bureau (IAM) is to improve the urban environment, maintain a clean and tidy city, as well as refuse collection. The bureau continued to replace street litterbins with compacting bins and closed refuse tips, which greatly reduced environmental hygiene problems arising from litterbins. The bureau also handles complaints about environmental hygiene, inspects urban hygiene, monitors the waste-disposal franchise company, manages landfills, improves the facilities and distribution of refuse stations, organises city cleaning campaigns to promote awareness of environmental hygiene, maintains and manages public conveniences and prevents rat problems.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau handled 4,163 complaints in 2022.

During 2022, the Municipal Affairs Bureau was responsible for answering the "Life Support and Assistance Team" hotline and supporting the Covid-19 Patient Support Hotline, in accordance with the Government's anti-pandemic arrangements. In response to the Health Bureau's request to clean and disinfect buildings and designated areas related to confirmed Covid-19 cases, a total of 175 cleaning and disinfection operations were carried out, including in buildings, hotels, entertainment venues, shops, storage warehouses, shopping malls, vessels and taxis. In addition, the bureau cooperated with the Government's "Life Support and Assistance Team" to implement precise prevention and control by zoning and classification, to support the basic living and food needs of residents in the control zones during the blockade management period, providing about 13,500 emergency food kits, 85,000 hot lunch boxes and frozen vegetable and meat packs, and responding to 6,700 orders to provide assistance with transferring materials. About 33,000 hot meals were also provided to the temporary medical facilities.

In response to the pandemic, the Municipal Affairs Bureau adjusted the three-layer pandemic prevention measures for imported cold chain foodstuffs, cold chain food environments and personnel, and implemented the cold chain food pandemic prevention arrangement of "full disinfection of outer packaging and full inspection of inner packaging", in order to improve the emergency response level related to cold chain and fresh food in various ways, to minimise the risk of disease transmission.

In 2022, more than 120,000 food and environmental samples were tested, all of which passed the new coronavirus nucleic acid test.

Cemeteries

Macao has six public cemeteries and 11 private cemeteries. The public cemeteries are Macao St Michael's Cemetery, Macao Our Lady of Piety Cemetery, Sa Kong Cemetery and Carmo Cemetery on Taipa, Municipal Cemetery and Va Ian (Chinese) Cemetery on Coloane. The private cemeteries are the Parsee Cemetery; the Old Protestant Cemetery; Mong Ha New Cemetery; Muslim Cemetery; Kai Fong (Neighbourhood) Cemetery, Pao Choc (Firecrackers) Cemetery, and Hao Si Cemetery on Taipa; and Kok Ip Cemetery, Ha Sac Cemetery, Ka Ho Cemetery and Son I Cemetery on Coloane.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau is responsible for managing public cemeteries and supervising the operation of private cemeteries. To provide a variety of funeral services to residents, it started to provide bone cremation services and green (tree) burial services in September 2014 and September 2015, respectively. In 2022, the bureau conducted 54 bone cremations and 62 green (tree) burials.

Public Toilets

The Municipal Affairs Bureau has implemented various measures to optimise the distribution and services of Macao's public toilets. At present, the bureau manages 89 street toilets, distributed across various districts and open to citizens and tourists free of charge.

Environmental Protection and Clean City Education

To raise residents' awareness of keeping the city clean, reducing waste at source, and safeguarding against rodents and dengue fever, the Municipal Affairs Bureau continued organising a variety of city cleaning publicity and promotion activities. In 2022, a total of 1,317 education and publicity activities on environmental hygiene were held, with over 212,000 people participating.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau formulated special publicity plans for target groups including Macao residents, students, group volunteers, tourists in Macao, non-resident employees and foreigners, and cooperated with other government departments and organisations to organise a variety of environmental hygiene promotion events. In addition, the bureau cooperated with organisations to conduct community inspections and publicity activities, and distributed information on sanitation and publicity activities through various media.

In 2022, the Municipal Affairs Bureau launched a community pandemic prevention and cleaning campaign, which included the Environmental Hygiene Actions, coordinating with outsourced cleaning companies to strengthen cleaning and disinfection of public facilities and hawker areas, conducting health inspections of low-rise buildings that had been listed as control zones, and conducting preventive cleaning and disinfection of high-density buildings with hygiene issues; together with the Community Cleaning and Publicity Actions, joining forces with community organisations to carry out pandemic prevention cleaning activities and publicity work in parks, recreational areas and buildings, and mobilising community forces to strengthen pandemic prevention efforts. In 2022, a total of 4,238 buildings were inspected, 1,676.9 kilogrammes of garbage were cleared, and about 6,005 people were informed about pandemic prevention through hygiene measures.

Environment Information Centre

The Mong Ha Environment Information Centre provided an environmental education venue for schools, groups, and the public, regularly organising workshops and activities about city cleanliness and environmental protection. Meanwhile, the centre continually optimises its facilities, including by designing a series of informational display boards and photo spots (rainbow stairs and hand-painted murals) based on the Macao City Clean-up Campaign mascot, KABO, and adding more interactive educational games, to create an environment suitable for family participation and promote

the importance of maintaining city cleanliness and environmental hygiene to participants. In 2022, the centre received 10,828 visitors.

Volunteers for Clean-up Campaign

The “Friends of Macao City” volunteer team was established in 2012. Its members are ambassadors for community environmental hygiene, environment protection and food safety. They spread messages about keeping the city clean, reducing waste at source and obeying environmental hygiene laws among Macao residents, tourists and foreigners living in Macao.

Oscar’s Farm

Oscar’s Farm is located on Estrada de Choc Van and covers an area of around 133,868 square metres. The farm is now open to the public free of charge, and is among the places in Macao where livestock can be seen. It is suitable for residents and tourists to enjoy a weekend outing. It employs organic farming, and avoids using pesticides or synthetic fertilisers. It usually collects the faeces of raised livestock and green waste (dead branches and leaves), puts them through a wood grinder, and then regenerates them into natural organic fertiliser through composting.

The farm has facilities including livestock pens, composting areas, leisure huts, arbours, farming plots, a wildlife pond and a natural well. The Municipal Affairs Bureau accepts online applications every year for farm tours and two-day, one-night camping activities, during which participants can experience farm life, deepen their understanding of organic farming and immerse themselves in nature.

Happy Farm

Happy Farm opened in 2016, with an original area of 5,972 square metres. After expansion work in mid-2020, the total area is now 22,995 square metres with expanded facilities. It serves as a venue for hands-on experience of organic farming, and includes a farming area, a herb garden, a flower garden, a fruit tree garden, a sapling area, a display area for seasonal vegetables, a natural water conservation area and an insect museum – and was established in the hope of allowing visitors to escape from the hustle and bustle of the city, as if walking into the tranquil and pleasant countryside.

The farming area has a large hut for group activities, where hands-on farming experience, workshops and educational activities with themes of greening and environmental protection are organised. Applications to join the farming activities can be made online. Successful applicants need only pay a small administrative fee to join the three to four-month farming activities, with the harvested crops belonging to the applicants. The greening workshops are conducted on-site, and the finished products can be taken home.

Food Hygiene

The relevant laws of Macao stipulate that most imported foods (primarily animal and plant products) are subject to compulsory quarantine and inspection before being placed on the market.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau's quarantine personnel conduct hygiene inspections of imported livestock, meat, vegetables, fresh fruits and fishery products, food products originating from animals, and fresh perishable products. These inspections are conducted at the Border Gate Checkpoint, Macao border crossing area of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, Ilha Verde quarantine station, the New Wholesale Market, the Slaughter House, piers of the Inner Harbour, Ka Ho Harbour, the airport and other quarantine points.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau continues quarantining imported livestock and animal-derived foods, to prevent outbreaks of infectious diseases. Imported food items such as vegetables, fish, fresh and frozen meat, eggs, fruits and canned goods are subject to inspection, quarantine, and monitoring through sampling. The bureau is responsible for food hygiene inspection of shops selling meat, vegetables and fish, and issuing licences to them. It regularly implements concerted efforts focused on hygiene, and has introduced a grading system to monitor the hygiene and safety of live food. In addition, it carries out quality control and issues health certificates for the export of food produced in Macao.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau also ensures food safety by monitoring foods sold in local markets, inspections, food testing, publicity and education, as well as establishing food safety standards and guidelines according to the Food Safety Law.

By 2022, the Government had established 12 sets of food safety standards: Maximum Residue of Veterinary Medicines in Food, List of Substances Prohibited from Use in Food, Maximum Levels of Radionuclides in Food, Maximum Levels of Bacterial Pathogens in Infant Formula, Maximum Levels of Pathogenic Micro-organisms in Dairy Products, Maximum Levels of Mycotoxins in Food, Requirements on Nutrition Contents of Infant Formula, Standards for Use of Food Colourings in Food, Standards for Use of Sweeteners in Foods, Maximum Levels of Heavy Metal Contaminants in Food, Rules on the Use of Preservatives and Antioxidants in Foodstuffs, and Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues in Foodstuffs. It also updated the Maximum Residues of Veterinary Medicines in Food. To date, 67 sets of Food Safety Guidelines have been published, to instruct the industry to maintain hygiene and safety during operations.

To enhance food safety, the Municipal Affairs Bureau regularly monitors foods sold in local markets, to understand the level of food hygiene. In 2022, three sampling tests of seasonal foods – Chinese New Year confectionery, sticky rice dumplings of the Dragon Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival mooncakes – were conducted. A total of 170 samples were taken; seven of these failed the tests, and there was a 95.9 percent pass rate. Three sampling studies were also conducted: a special investigation of noodle products and sauces; a special investigation of light meals and rice balls; and a special investigation of edible oils and fats. For each, the pass rate was 99.8 percent. Routine sampling tests of food sold in the market were conducted throughout the year, with 3,183 samples tested, achieving a pass rate of 99.5 percent.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau performs risk monitoring and assessment in response to overseas food safety issues, and alerts the industry about potential risks to Macao resulting from such issues. In 2022, 29 food safety alerts were issued, and a fax service, an SMS alert service and a food safety information mobile app push notification service were employed on an on-going basis, to enable prompt responses by the industry.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau continued to educate and communicate with the public about food safety risks. In 2022, the bureau focused on guiding the industry to effectively manage corporate pandemic prevention and food safety. Also, aligning with By-law No. 30/2021 – Registration System for Takeaway Establishments, the bureau continued to enhance the food industry’s understanding of the purpose of the by-law, the procedures for applying for registration, and the penalty system – by employing diverse online and offline promotion methods, to encourage the industry to meet its business responsibilities.

By 31 December 2022, approximately 3,376 takeaway establishments had completed registration and were operational. The Municipal Affairs Bureau strictly enforces regulatory work, and conducts on-site inspections of each takeaway establishment that applies for registration.

During the year, 45 talks and outdoor advocacy activities, seven food hygiene supervisor courses and nine monthly Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene Courses were organised for the industry; along with two seminars on food safety management for takeaway operators and seven talks on food delivery safety. To educate the public about food safety risks, in 2022 the bureau continued organising food safety education talks, covering 26 themes in three categories: risk prevention, risk awareness, and food and nutrition. In all, 306 seminars and activities were organised for the public. To support the annual World Food Safety Day in 2022, with the theme “Safer food, better health”, the Municipal Affairs Bureau launched an online game with prizes, thus increasing public awareness of food safety.

Veterinary Health

Monitoring animal hygiene is an important integral part of preventing animal pandemics and securing public health. The Inspection and Veterinary Control Division, under the supervision of the Municipal Affairs Bureau, is mainly responsible for supervising and managing animal hygiene in Macao. Its duties include animal protection, animal management, prevention and control of pandemic animal diseases, quarantine of imported and exported animals and animal food, and publicity, promotion and civic education regarding animal protection and animal hygiene.

For maintaining public hygiene, public safety, and animal protection, in 2022 the Municipal Affairs Bureau vaccinated 4,417 dogs and 726 cats against rabies for three years, issued 4,177 dog licences, and captured 253 stray dogs and 406 stray cats. It also prosecuted 449 cases violating Law No. 4/2016 – “Animal Protection Law”.

To prevent avian flu, the Municipal Affairs Bureau collects wild bird carcasses from all around Macao on an on-going basis, and in 2022 a total of 426 carcasses were collected. It also collected faecal samples at the habitats of migratory birds and aviaries for avian influenza screening, and during the year a total of 657 wild bird carcasses and faecal samples were screened. The results of all such screenings were negative and no avian influenza was found.

To enhance veterinary health in Macao, Law No. 7/2020 – Animal Pandemic Prevention Law came into effect on 1 September 2020. No local or imported positive cases of avian influenza, rabies, equine infectious metritis, equine infectious anaemia or equine piroplasmiasis have been found during routine disease surveillance work. Moreover, the Law on Veterinary Clinical Care and Commercial Activity of Animals passed its first reading in the Legislative Assembly in May 2022.

Wet Markets

There are nine wet markets in Macao: seven on the Macao peninsula and one each on the islands of Taipa and Coloane. These house a total of 867 market stalls.

In 2022, 842 market stalls were rented on a monthly basis, involving a total of 1,786 operators, of whom 843 were stall tenants, 541 were stall assistants and 402 were employees. Additionally, 25 stalls were temporarily closed during the renovation of the Almirante Lacerda Municipal Market. The Municipal Affairs Bureau is responsible for wet market management and tenant management.

The Public Markets Management Regime Law came into effect on 1 January 2022, as did the by-law Complementary Rules for the Allocation and Leasing of Public Market Stalls. The Municipal Affairs Bureau has developed a series of related guidelines and promotional work. During inspections, market inspectors provide guidance and education to stall operators regarding any non-compliant behaviour, and guide them to comply with relevant regulations. Since the implementation of the new law, the operations and services of public markets have been significantly improved, especially in terms of price transparency, environmental cleanliness and tenants' business initiatives.

Hawkers

The Municipal Affairs Bureau licenses, manages and monitors hawkers. In addition, it manages various large temporary sales activities, such as sales of firecrackers and the Lunar New Year's Eve Market, during major Chinese traditional festivals, as well as special markets like the Taipa Flea Market.

By the end of 2022, the bureau issued 630 hawkers' licences, including 90 cooked food stall licences and 68 special permits, to flower hawkers from Wanzai District, Zhuhai; the total was 278 lower than in 2021, representing a reduction of 30.62 percent.

The Slaughter House

In accordance with relevant regulations, livestock such as pigs, cattle and sheep must be slaughtered at the Slaughter House. The Municipal Affairs Bureau stations veterinarians and quarantine personnel in the slaughterhouse to supervise its operations and hygiene. All slaughtered products must be checked before and after slaughter and certified fit for human consumption before they can be sold. The bureau is also responsible for protecting animal rights, preventing abuse, supervising the transportation of livestock and destroying sub-standard meat. In 2022, the Slaughter House butchered 1,301 head of cattle and 102,083 pigs; a total of 103,384 animals.

Social Welfare Services

The Government designs its social welfare policies in conjunction with non-governmental agencies, to deliver practical social services that meet residents' needs, aiming to solve individual, family and social problems, raise the overall quality of life, and jointly build social harmony and love-filled families.

Social Welfare Bureau

The Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) is a government department that helps draft, coordinate, liaise, drive and execute the social work policies and social welfare of the MSAR. It provides individual and family assistance, and services for children and teenagers, and the elderly. It also offers rehabilitation services, anti-drug-dependence services, problem gambling prevention services, and social rehabilitation services. The social service facilities under its umbrella include the Social Services Centres, a casualty centre for victims of disasters, Assessment Centre for Rehabilitation, Drug Treatment Centres (Methadone), Healthy Life Education Centre and Chi Ai Hin (Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment).

In 2022, the Government continued providing Old Age Allowances to Macao permanent residents aged 65 or above through the Social Welfare Bureau, with each person receiving 9,000 patacas in the year. There was a total of 119,523 eligible cases (including 54,220 backdated cases from prior years), and the allowances amounted to 1.076 billion patacas. The Government also continued giving disability gratuities to Disability Assessment Card holders who are permanent residents, with an ordinary gratuity amount of 9,000 patacas and a special gratuity amount of 18,000 patacas in 2022, for a total of 17,795 eligible cases (including 1,305 backdated cases from prior years), involving a total of 214 million patacas. The Carers Allowance Pilot Scheme launched on 9 November 2020 provides a monthly allowance of 2,175 patacas. As of 31 December 2022, a total of 201 cases had been granted a cumulative total of approximately 6.93 million patacas disbursed.

In 2022, the Social Welfare Bureau subsidised 255 social service organisations/facilities/programmes, involving over 4,600 workers and a total of 1.617 billion patacas. Overall, the Social Welfare Bureau spent around 3.181 billion patacas on social services in 2022, representing an increase of 9.7 percent from the previous year, including the various subsidies mentioned above, as well as assistances and benefits.

Law No. 5/2019 - Professional Accreditation and Licensing for Social Workers came into effect in 2020. By December 2022, 2,089 people had been recognised by professional accreditation for social workers, and 1,582 people had valid social worker registration certificates.

In 2022, the Social Welfare Bureau's support for the prevention and control of Covid-19 included: in accordance with the management plan for region-specific and multi-level disease prevention and control, the bureau formed a Life Support and Assistance group with the Municipal Affairs Bureau, comprising 925 staff members, to provide door-to-door inspections, along with dietary and basic living support for residents of control zones, and support the needs of disadvantaged groups.

During the 14 rounds of community-wide nucleic acid testing from June to August 2022, the Social Welfare Bureau coordinated a total of eight nucleic acid testing stations and approximately 3,900 staff members to support the testing sites. During the year, in collaboration with the Health Bureau and private organisations, the Social Welfare Bureau provided 5,827 home-based nucleic acid testing services for people with special needs. The bureau operated nine service sites for residents who were unfamiliar with mobile application operations by providing consultations, making vaccination appointments, assisting in transcoding, and making appointments for nucleic acid tests. As of December 2022, 14,835 people were served.

The Social Welfare Bureau urged 242 social service facilities to update their contingency plans for pandemic prevention and conduct tabletop drills. In response to the development of the pandemic, to protect the health and safety of service users and staff, the bureau suspended the operations of all subsidised nurseries, daytime social service facilities and community facilities from 19 June to 14 August, and called on non-subsidised facilities to follow suit. From 24 June to 14 August, the bureau coordinated a total of 36 elderly, rehabilitation and drug rehabilitation institutions in Macao, to implement prevention-oriented closed-loop management measures.

In September 2021, the bureau released additional financial aid to beneficiary families, as compensation for the extra expenditure resulting from the pandemic. In all, 2,326 families benefited, with subsidies totalling 14.6 million patacas.

In 2022, the Social Welfare Bureau strengthened emotional support to residents by continuing to provide psychological counselling hotline services during the pandemic, and handled a total of 8,473 calls. The bureau coordinated with non-governmental institutions to provide information, education, counselling, caring and consultation services through face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and the Internet, serving some 350,000 people.

The Social Welfare Bureau has been supporting temporary medical examination centres, providing material support and counselling services. By the end of 2022, the bureau had assisted in the handling and delivery of about 290,000 materials; and launched 65 anti-pandemic promotional posts, seven information packages with images and text, nine promotional videos and three question-and-answer packages.

In December, Macao entered the second stage of the pandemic prevention and control transition period, and launched a home quarantine information website to provide residents with essential information. On 14 December, the Covid-19 Patient Support Hotline was established, to answer patients' questions. As of 31 December, a total of 37,843 calls had been received.

Family and Community Services

The Social Welfare Bureau has established four social services centres and one branch centre in Macao, providing individuals and families in need with personal and family counselling, financial aid, round-the-clock support, disaster relief, referral and legal consultation services. The bureau also provides counselling and support for individuals facing domestic violence, and distributes various benefits and allowances including old age allowances and disability gratuities.

In 2022, a total of 2,786 cases were handled by four social services centres and one branch centre, and 6,369 services of different types were provided, resulting in 2,898 families receiving regular subsidies, involving 4,474 individuals.

In 2022, Macao had one public shelter, 10 integrated family and community service centres, 13 community centres, 12 project based services, and five shelters and temporary shelters, the majority of them being subsidised by the Social Welfare Bureau and operated by non-governmental organisations.

During 2022, 42 people were admitted to the Ilha Verde shelter, and 229 people used the services providing shelter from winter cold and summer heat. The 10 integrated family and community

services centres provided services to 931,228 people; the 13 community centres provided services to 767,050 people; 12 project-based services were provided to 1,225,066 people, and the five shelters and temporary shelters provided services for 233 people. In response to the pandemic, the Ilha Verde Temporary Shelter Centre was opened to provide shelter services for those in need of resettlement, with a total of 6,724 people staying during the year.

To enhance welfare recipients' incentives to work and assist them to re-enter the labour market, the IAS and four non-governmental agencies cooperated in implementing the Community Employment Assistance Scheme. By the end of 2022, the scheme had 611 participants. Additionally, by the end of 2022, the Positive Life Programme, which was launched to encourage employment, attracted participation by 1,072 individuals, 421 of whom had already received employment counselling and accepted job referrals.

In 2022, the IAS received 2,666 cases involving notifications through the Family Crisis Hotline. After eliminating duplicate cases, 1,949 cases were identified, including 1,157 involving family disputes, family conflicts and initial suspected domestic violence, and 792 other cases. Among the 97 preliminary cases of suspected domestic violence, 39 cases were assessed and identified, 19 of which involved spouses, 16 involved children, three involved elderly persons, and one involved violence between family members.

Children's and Youth Services

In 2022, Macao had 66 child-care centres, 42 of which received regular subsidies from the Social Welfare Bureau. Child-care services in Macao offered quotas totalling 9,591, and a total of 6,991 children enrolled in them. One of the centres was funded by the bureau, and provided parent-child centre services to 21,202 people during 2022, promoting play time between parents and children and creating harmonious family relationships. The Government provided the Priority Child Care Service for Children from Disadvantaged Families, so that disadvantaged families were given priority in receiving services in subsidised child-care centres.

There are nine homes for children and adolescents in Macao offering short or long-term care and counselling for orphans, as well as children and adolescents who have been abandoned, who lack family care, or who are on the verge of a crisis as a result of family or social conflicts. In 2022, these homes housed 292 children and youngsters.

There are four community youth social work teams in Macao, comprising social workers who conduct outreach work in various places such as amusement game centres, sports grounds and fast food restaurants. They get in touch with youths who are more vulnerable to life crises and provide counselling services, and assist them with facing personal, family and social problems. The teams also provide youth career development services, support services to families with children and youth at risk, community support services and drug abuse prevention services. During 2022, 10,966 people participated in activities and groups organised by the teams.

There are two Youth and Family Integrated Service Centres in Macao to organise youth development activities, provide youth counselling and supporting services, organise family life education and family activities, and provide family counselling and supporting services, as well as school supporting services. In 2022, the centres had 33,662 members receiving these services.

The Social Welfare Bureau is the only authorised organisation in Macao that deals with adoption services. It handled 15 such cases in 2022. The bureau is responsible for providing assistance to minors who become involved in judicial actions, in accordance with the social protection system. During 2022, the bureau processed 280 such cases. Moreover, the bureau, in conjunction with the community youth social work teams, provides counselling services under the community support scheme to youths between 12 years to 16 years of age who have committed criminal offences or misdemeanours. During 2022, the bureau processed two such cases.

Services for the Elderly

In 2022, the Social Welfare Bureau continued providing subsidies and technical support to community organisations, for establishing various social facilities and support services, and promoting the improvement of services. The aim was to provide appropriate services to elderly persons in need, and let them enjoy their remaining years in comfort. In 2017, the Chief Executive designated the ninth day of the ninth month of the lunar calendar as the Senior Citizen's Day of the Macao SAR, through an executive order.

In 2022, the interdepartmental steering group on Macao's retirement protection mechanism continued to follow up regarding the long-term measures (2021-2025) under the Plan for the Elderly Services for 2016-2025. Of the 100 long-term measures, 62 have been implemented and completed.

In 2022, Macao had 24 homes for the elderly, providing residential care services for infirm elderly persons; 14 of them are subsidised by the Social Welfare Bureau. These 24 homes for the elderly provided around 2,510 beds, and 1,976 senior citizens were housed in homes for the elderly. In addition, there were eight elderly service facilities providing day-care services to elderly persons with health problems who are unable to take care of themselves. There were ten other elderly day-care centres, and 26 neighbourhood social centres providing entertainment services for the elderly.

In 2022, 617 senior citizens enjoyed services at day care centres, 6,927 senior citizens enjoyed services at elderly day centres, and 7,460 senior citizens used the services provided at social centres.

Macao's home care services are provided through one home care service team and six home care and support service teams operating under the three elderly day-care centres, two daycare centres and one multi-service centre. The teams provide household and home care services to elderly persons who are weak and need others to take care of them, so that they receive proper concern and care. In 2022, a total of 1,413 cases were handled, of which 497 involved senior citizens living alone, and 916 in which the senior citizens were not living alone.

In addition, an elderly caring service network and a supporting network for senior citizens living alone are provided for single elderly people and households with two elderly persons. The services include volunteer visits, caring phone calls and social activities, enabling the elderly to feel that they are cared for by society. In 2022, the two services were provided to 4,135 and 953 senior citizens, respectively.

The Tele-Assistant "Peng On Tung" is a round-the-clock support services through home fixed-line telephones and outdoor watches. Related services also include a hotline service for senior

citizens, providing emotional support, regular greetings, a community information service and referral services, and arranging regular visits.

During 2022, the fixed-line and outdoor services provided assistance to 4,878 and 1,114 senior citizens in need, respectively, of whom 704 were using both services and 2,440 were living alone.

The IAS provided an Elderly Home Safety Evaluation and Equipment Subsidy Scheme for low income elderly families, elderly persons living alone or households with two elderly persons. The scheme aims to improve home safety by household safety evaluations, and installation of bathroom equipment and handrails. In 2022, household safety instructions were given to 627 households, and equipment was installed in 613 households.

Senior Citizen's Card

Citizens holding Macao Resident Identity Cards aged 65 or above are eligible to apply for the Senior Citizen's Card. Senior Citizen's Card holders are entitled to the welfare and benefits offered by the public organisations and enterprises that have signed cooperation agreements with the IAS. By the end of 2022, the Social Welfare Bureau had issued a cumulative total of 109,230 Senior Citizen's Cards.

A total of 3,712 senior citizens had obtained their electronic cards. In addition, the card holders can include the electronic card in the electronic card package of the One-stop Public Services Account.

Rehabilitation Services

In 2022, the Social Welfare Bureau continued to follow up on the long-term measures (2021 to 2025) under the "Ten-year Plan for Rehabilitation Services 2016 – 2025", with 42 out of the 81 long-term measures implemented and completed.

In 2022, Macao had 11 rehabilitation homes, of which nine provide accommodation, training, social and leisure activities to mentally handicapped adults or chronic mental patients, and children aged 15 below with mental or physical disabilities; and two combine halfway house and supported hostel for people recovering from mental illness.

Moreover, there are 12 day centres which provide independent living training, group studies, rehabilitation treatment, regular activities and individual assistance to the hearing impaired, the mentally handicapped, people recovering from mental illness and the visually impaired. In 2022, the 11 rehabilitation homes provided services to 788 people, while the 12 day rehabilitation centres offered services to 12,991 people.

In 2022, there were six sheltered workshops, vocational training centres and supported employment centres in Macao. Services were provided to 416 people. There were also four pre-schools/education centres to provide early special education and training, and assistance for children with development disorders and impaired hearing. In 2022, the four pre-schools/education centres served 495 people.

The rehabilitation bus service in Macao is provided by two agencies. The IAS subsidises the

cost of purchasing and operating rehabilitation buses. The service enables people with impaired mobility, physically disabled persons and patients requiring haemodialysis to commute between their homes and hospitals.

A no-reservation feeder service was also provided. The bus service allowed people with disabilities to commute to meet their friends and relatives, participate in cultural, recreational and leisure activities, and handle personal affairs. In 2022, the two agencies served 29,525 passengers.

Macao has two comprehensive rehabilitation service centres, including one designed for people with intellectual disabilities. Services provided by the centre include: small scale residential services to mildly and moderately mentally handicapped people aged between 16 to 55, which in 2022 served 21 people by providing independent living skills training; and providing family resources services to the mentally handicapped and their families, with 15,810 people served in 2022.

The other centre is a comprehensive rehabilitation service centre providing vocational training and rehabilitation services which served 138 people in 2022. The Social Welfare Bureau provides professional assessment services to Macao residents who need to apply for or use rehabilitation services operated by agencies funded by the bureau, so they can find the most appropriate services. There were 155 cases of providing these services in 2022.

As at the end of 2022, the Disability Assessment Cards attracted 27,915 new applications and 11,604 renewal applications, and 21,009 new cards were issued by IAS.

Prevention and Treatment of Drug Dependence

The prevention of drug abuse mainly targets school, family and community in organising anti-drug abuse promotion and education activities. The activities aim at widely spreading and promoting the message of anti-drug abuse through seminars, training programmes, advertisements, games, a website, enquiries hotline, reception service and other cultural and leisure activities. Funding and technical support are also available to assist non-governmental institutions in organising anti-drug activities.

In 2022, 4,483 people participated in training courses and seminars on anti-drug abuse, organised by the IAS for schools, the community and professionals. Besides providing primary school students with healthy life and anti-drug education programmes, Healthy Life Education Centre also provides teenagers and the public with various cultural, physical and art activities, with anti-drugs and healthy life messaging. During 2022, a total of 3,843 people participated in its activities.

The Healthy Life Education programme, which was formerly conducted especially for students aged from five years to 12 years, attracted participation by 16,076 primary school students from 60 schools. In 2022, the education programme was expanded to also include senior secondary school students, and attracted participation by 4,708 secondary school students from 12 secondary schools.

The IAS subsidised organisations to hold Macao College Students Healthy Campus 2022 promotion activities; and distributed 16 messages about drug abuse prevention, reaching 14,658 students through tertiary institutions and social platform groups, and distributed nearly 705 support kits, with about 19,386 people participating in 37 activities. To promote anti-drugs education at home and school, the IAS held 10 parent-child seminars, with participation by 313 people; and

launched a series of anti-drugs publicity campaigns with messaging via comics, reaching a total of 258,749 people through online platforms.

The IAS and two community drug treatment centres provide comprehensive voluntary treatment and rehabilitation services for drug-dependent people. They include outpatient and residential drug addiction treatment, as well as drug counselling services. During 2022, a total of 409 drug addicts sought help, 55 of whom were seeking help for the first time.

In 2022, to enhance the integration of drug rehabilitation service resources, the original drug rehabilitation facilities were merged in order to provide comprehensive drug rehabilitation services. The services provided during the year included accommodation for 49 people, family support services for 98 people, career development services for 3,146 people, and community outreach services for 13,853 people, with a total of 17,146 people served. An outreach treatment service for drug-dependent youths and two drug rehabilitation outreach services provided outreach services for 6,577 people; outreach services designed for drug-dependent youngsters and problem juveniles were used by 2,699 people; and services designed for the family members of drug addicts were provided to 688 people.

In 2022, a career development programme for youth abstaining from drugs organised 18 training courses with attendance by 517 people, and provided internships for 33 participants. 13 participants were successfully employed. The retention rate of youth participating in the programme was 100 percent. A range of support was also provided to 210 family members. A total of 11,194 people were served during the year.

In addition, a free outpatient service to help people quit smoking provided services to 196 people. Case consultations, group activities and social promotional activities were provided to 2,917 people.

To strengthen the follow-up support for rehabilitated drug abusers reintegrating into society, in 2022 the IAS cooperated with private organisations to launch the Methadone Case Support Programme, serving 72 cases on 410 occasions. The IAS also cooperated with the Cultural Affairs Bureau and non-governmental organisations to launch the “Hold On To Hope” Vocational Training Internship Programme, holding more than eight training sessions with 990 participants, 13 of whom participated in various internships.

Regarding promotion of drug rehabilitation services, the IAS held a sharing session on cooperation in drug abuse prevention services, and launched the Healthy Community Partnership training programme in both online and offline modes, attracting participation by 502 people, to further consolidate cooperation and exchanges with related organisations. The IAS continued enhancing the public’s knowledge of the harm caused by drugs and the ways to seek help through the *Know Drugs* mobile app, the WeChat “Smart Parents” public account and the Go Go Goal mobile app, sharing information about drug abuse prevention and treatment. In addition, the IAS and non-governmental organisations co-organised online quizzes such as “Basic Law for Teens” and “Self-Control for Alcoholics”, to strengthen the public’s anti-drug and anti-alcoholic awareness. Together with various online activities, 58,491 people were reached.

Prevention and Treatment of Problem Gambling

The Chi Ai Hin of the Social Welfare Bureau is a service unit responsible for providing counselling

services and professional training to problem gamblers, and implementing community education promoting responsible gambling.

In 2022, the Central Registry System of Individuals with Gambling Disorders received 83 new cases of people seeking assistance. Community organisations were also commissioned to provide a round-the-clock gambling counselling hotline and online counselling service, which received 1,339 and 1,559 requests for assistance through telephone calls and online platforms, respectively.

To strengthen community education, 18 community talks regarding prevention of gambling disorders were organised, and attended by 411 participants.

The centre collaborated with community organisations in launching the Smart Money Management Programme, and organised 353 classroom sessions for 10,757 students. Four training sessions on teaching kits for teachers were also organised for 194 people. In 2022, the IAS began subsidising “Bosco Youth Service Freeland” of the Bosco Youth Service Network, to implement addiction prevention services and activities for young people. During the year, 162 sessions were organised, serving more than 700,000 participants and online viewers.

The inter-departmental Working Group on Responsible Gambling, formed by the Macao SAR Government, previously launched the Responsible Gambling Indicators, and carries out phased reviews. In 2022, 15 gaming operators were evaluated and awarded the qualification of “Responsible Gaming Implementation Model Unit”.

Given the potential for illicit gambling activities focused on the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the Social Welfare Bureau funded seven problem gambling prevention and treatment organisations, which launched a series of activities to prevent sports betting addiction, attracting more than 20,000 direct participants and reaching around 163,000 people online. The Training Sharing Programme was established, to provide sustainable training for problem gambling and addiction service organisations in Macao. A total of 68 people obtained certificates in the three-unit programme. The Participation in Gambling Activities by Macao People 2022 survey was conducted, to investigate the latest situation of residents’ participation in gambling activities and problem gambling, thus providing scientific data and a reference for problem gambling prevention work. As of 2022, there was a total of 59 responsible gambling information kiosks (including 52 kiosks and seven stations), with 10,633 logins.

Social Rehabilitation Services

After reforming in 2016, the Social Welfare Bureau started providing social rehabilitation services to assist the court with implementing non-custodial sentences and measures, such as parole, supervision for probationers, labour in lieu of penalty, suspension of proceedings, judicial restoration, and implement education and supervision orders for youth offenders, such as rehabilitation, community service order, rule abiding order, probation order and half-way home order, aiming to assist offenders with restoring law-abiding lives and reintegrating into society.

During 2022, During 2022, 703 and 187 cases of discharged offenders and young offenders were handled, respectively. In addition, a half-way house for discharged offenders and a half-way house for young offenders provided services for 48 people and 23 people, respectively.

To strengthen the patriotism of rehabilitated persons and assisted youth, the Social Welfare Bureau cooperated with non-governmental organisations to launch a series of patriotic education activities to guide rehabilitated persons and juvenile offenders to gain a deeper understanding of national development, and enhance their sense of national identity, love for the country and abiding the law. In 2022, the activities attracted participation by 569 people, including 423 rehabilitated persons and 146 young offenders receiving counselling.

Social Security Fund

The Social Security Fund Authority is under the supervision of the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, and is responsible for implementing various policy measures concerning social security and managing relevant resources.

The Social Security Fund was set up on 23 March, 1990, with a primary objective of providing social security to local employees at that time. With the exacerbated social phenomenon of ageing, residents' demand for universal coverage is growing. In November 2008, the Government announced the Social Security and Old-age Pension System Reform Programme. Its core aim is to build a double-tier social security system, founded on the first-tier social security system, so that all Macao residents can enjoy basic social protection, particularly old-age protection, to improve their quality of life, with more ample protection for retirement life supported by the second-tier, non-mandatory Central Provident Fund.

Social Security System

Law No. 4/2010 – “Social Security System” came into effect on 1 January 2011. It is the first tier of the double-tier social security system. This system operates according to the principles of social insurance. Its income derives from appropriation from gaming, a one-percent appropriation from the recurrent income of the Government Budget, three percent of the central executive budget balance by the end of every fiscal year, the contributions of employees, employers and arbitrary contributors, employment fees for non-resident workers, and the income of the investment of the Social Security Fund.

Contribution

The Social Security System comprises an obligatory contribution system and an arbitrary contribution system. Employees and their employers are required to make obligatory contributions to the Social Security Fund, at an amount of 90 patacas per month (60 patacas by employers and 30 patacas by employees), and other Macao residents who comply with the relevant legal requirements can make contributions by enrolling in the arbitrary system, with the full amount of contributions – 90 patacas per month, to be paid by the beneficiaries themselves.

In 2022 a total of 354,000 beneficiaries made their contributions. They included around 286,000 employees and 68,000 voluntary contributors (including in-service public servants registered in the retirement and pension system). The contributions totalled around 380 million patacas.

Various Social Security Benefits and Allowances

According to the current social security system, eligible beneficiaries are legally entitled to pensions, disability allowance, unemployment allowance, sickness allowance, birth allowance, marriage allowance, funeral allowance, and compensation for respiratory occupational diseases.

In 2022, various benefits were given to 148,000 people, 137,000 of whom received pensions. Besides, allowances were given to 20,000 people. Social security payments totalled about 5.67 billion patacas, including around 5.02 billion patacas for pensions (including an additional payment in January).

Non-mandatory Central Provident Fund System

Law No. 7/2017 – “Non-mandatory Central Provident Fund System” (or non-mandatory CPF) came into effect on 1 January 2018. It is the second tier in the double-tier social security system, aiming at enhancing retirement protection for citizens of the Macao SAR, and to fill a gap in the existing social security system.

The non-mandatory CPF comprises a contribution system and an allocation scheme. An account holder may make regular contributions via a contribution plan, and seek wealth accumulation through investment, to better prepare for a financially sound retirement.

Individual Account of Non-mandatory CPF

MSAR citizens falling into the following categories may become individual account holders of non-mandatory CPF:

1. Aged 18 or above;
2. Under the age of 18, but registered into the social security system in accordance with the law

An individual account of non-mandatory CPF comprises a sub-account managed by the government, a contribution sub-account, and a preserved sub-account.

Contribution System

There are a joint provident fund scheme and an individual provident fund scheme under the non-mandatory CPF. A joint provident fund scheme is designed for an employee. A participating employee and his or her employer make a contribution equivalent to five percent of the employee’s basic salary on a monthly basis. An individual provident fund scheme is designed for all account holders with a monthly minimum contribution amount of 500 patacas, and a maximum amount of 3,300 patacas. The maximum and minimum caps to the contribution are linked to the Law on the Minimum Wage for Cleaning and Security Workers of the Property Management Industry.

In 2022, 285 employers and a total of around 26,000 employees joined the non-mandatory CPF scheme; and about 85,000 people joined the individual non-mandatory CPF scheme. The contribution can be invested into the pension funds under non-mandatory CPF for wealth accumulation, and

managed by qualified fund management entities. By the end of 2022, there were seven fund management entities providing 42 open-end pension funds.

Upon termination of employment, the employee may be entitled to the accumulated benefits in the employer's part, according to the length of contribution and the applicable vesting schedule. Since an individual non-mandatory CPF account is portable, the benefits in the contribution scheme will not be cleared and withdrawn due to employment termination, and can maintain the account for continued investment.

Allocation Scheme

Account holders who are alive on 1 January in the allocation year, and meet the following requirements within the year prior to the allocation, are eligible for a one-off Incentive Basic Fund of 10,000 patacas:

1. Permanent residents of the Macao Special Administrative Region;
2. Aged 22 or above; and
3. Resided in Macao for at least 183 days.

If the Government's budget implementation in previous fiscal years allows, account holders who fulfil the above requirements may receive the special allocation of funds if there is a budget surplus. These amounts are recorded in sub-accounts managed by the Government. The funds provided may be kept for accumulation, or transferred to the contributor's sub-account or preserved sub-account for investment through proper transfer application.

In 2022, there were 613,000 Provident Fund Individual Account holders, of whom 9,938 initially fulfilled the requirements and were eligible for 10,000 patacas of the Incentive Basic Fund. As the SAR government's public finances did not record a budget implementation surplus in 2021, the special allocation funds for the budget surplus were not released in 2022. At the end of January 2023, the maximum accumulated appropriation and interest income of an account holder's sub-account managed by the Government was 77,000 patacas. If an account owner was eligible for the special allocation of a budget surplus since 2010, and has never transferred out, transferred or withdrawn funds from the government-managed sub-account, the accumulated interest income was up to 12,871 patacas.

Fund Withdrawal

To meet the objective of providing account holders more ample retirement protection, in general, an account holder must be aged 65 or above, and must fulfil other withdrawal conditions, before he or she can apply for fund withdrawal from his or her individual account. In 2022, there were 12,000 approved applications for withdrawals, resulting in a disbursement of 0.9 billion patacas.



A tribute to our city's guardians

On 18 June, when a local Covid-19 case was reported in Macao, the MSAR Government announced the commencement of a state of immediate prevention from 1am on 19 June. Later, from 11 July, the MSAR Government adopted relatively static management. During the anti-pandemic period, the whole of MSAR showed great unity. Medical workers, civil servants and volunteers who rushed to the frontline shouldered the heavy duty of safeguarding the lives and health of the public with dedication and courage, demonstrating the spirit of mutual help and support of Macao people.



