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## HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE



## 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 2020, the ratio of doctors to residents was 2.6 per thousand residents; that of nurses to residents was 3.8 per thousand residents; and that of hospital beds to residents was 2.5 per thousand residents. The general mortality rate was 3.3 per thousand inhabitants, while the mortality rate for infants under one year old was 0.7 per thousand live births. The average life expectancies for men and women in Macao were 81.1 and 86.9 years (2017-2020), 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 2020, these three categories accounted for 38.9 percent, 26.1 percent and 12.1 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 specialised health and social hygiene health care services, disease prevention measures and hygiene promotion work.

During the pandemic prevention and control period, the major work of the Health Bureau has included:

- Patient treatment and patient management: By 31 December 2020, there were totals of 46 confirmed cases and 46 discharged cases; no deaths, community infections nor hospital infections, and a low severe case rate and high cure rate. It required around two months from patients being hospitalised and isolated, to being rehabilitated and eventually discharged to the community, in order to protect the health of patients and other residents;
- Isolation facilities: Isolation wards were modified and renovated to provide 266 high standard

isolation beds. A plan for establishing a mobile cabin hospital was also formulated;

- Picking up Macao residents stranded in Hubei and Hong Kong International Airport, and transporting them back to Macao;
- Launching a guaranteed face mask supply scheme for the Macao public;
- Enhancing port quarantine measures;
- Introducing electronic technology to enhance border control and disease prevention, and launching the Macao Health Code;
- Enhancing community publicity on disease prevention and control, to strengthen residents' health education and awareness of precautions, and encouraging all sectors of society to join hands in preventing the spread of coronavirus in the community;
- Launching a special medical subsidy scheme to provide additional health care vouchers worth 600 patacas;
- Commencing a regular nucleic acid test programme; and
- Purchasing COVID-19 vaccines and implementing a vaccination programme: The bureau negotiated vaccine procurement with vaccine manufacturers, and signed an agreement with the WHO and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) on joining the global collective vaccine procurement programme. Sufficient vaccines would be purchased for all Macao residents. The vaccination plan was also formulated.

## Medical Benefits

The Government devotes considerable resources to medical and health care to optimise medical services and various health care facilities. In 2020, total expenditure on medical and health services was about 8.88 billion patacas, representing an increase of 15.46 percent over the 2019 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 Healthcare 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 27 specialist departments providing 73 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 primary 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 2020 Conde S. Januario Hospital had 439 doctors, 1,032 nurses and 1,020 beds (913 inpatient beds and 107 outpatient beds). It received 469,911 outpatients and 224,994 emergency cases and 21,593 inpatient cases. The bed occupancy rate was 61.18 percent, and patients stayed in the hospital for an average of 10.59 days. The daytime hospital treated 54,033 patients, surgical operations were performed on 8,528 occasions, and 2,627 women gave birth in the hospital. A total of 6,389,872 diagnoses and medical examinations were conducted.

## Community Health Care and Medical 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 and medical 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 eight health centres and three health stations offering adult health care, child health care, oral and dental health care, student health care, pre-natal health care, women's health care, Chinese medicine and acupuncture, psychological consultations, tobacco quitting consultations, cervical cancer and colorectal cancer screening, health screening and immunisation services.

At the end of 2020, there were 190 doctors (including general practitioners, dentists and Chinese medicine practitioners) and 252 nurses providing social hygiene health care services to 816,751 outpatients. The most sought-after outpatient services were adult health care, non-scheduled consultations, and Chinese medicine, which accounted for 41.05 percent, 24.91 percent and 8.61 percent, respectively, of total outpatient visits to the primary health care services.

## 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, psychological therapy, patient transportation, and dental cavity filling service and periodontal cure service. 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 healthcare vouchers, thereby enhancing the development of smart healthcare.

## Public Hygiene and Disease Prevention

Following World Health Organisation guidelines, the Health Bureau continues to conduct regular disease monitoring; enhance prevention of and response to 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 crossborder 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 2020, there were a total of 5,739 cases of infectious diseases requiring mandatory declaration, the top three of which were influenza (3,417 cases), Salmonella infection (751 cases) and tuberculosis (287 cases). There were 51 cases of human immunodeficiency virus infections, 46 cases of other coronavirus-related severe respiratory infections (COVID-19), four cases of rubella, one imported case of dengue fever, one case of pertussis, and six cases of legionnaires disease. There was no case of Avian influenza A (H7N9), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS) or Ebola virus.

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 2020, it tested 357,238 samples, and conducted a total of 525,296 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. In 2020, the law enforcement team patrolled 182,220 establishments, a decrease of 152,426 establishments (45.5 percent fewer) compared to the figure in 2019; and there were 2,372 prosecutions, including 2,349 cases of violating the smoking ban, 22 cases of illicit labelling of tobacco products and one case of illegal selling of e-cigarettes. There were 2,969 fewer penalty

tickets (a 55.8 percent decline) issued to violators of the smoking ban than in 2019. In 2020, 1,754 hotline calls were received: 640 enquiries, 1,073 complaints and 178 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 2020, a total of 13,387 residents registered as blood donors, and the centre collected 16,541 units of blood and prepared 43,031 units of blood components for 3,536 patients. Professional inspections and related consultation services were provided to 215 cases of non-common blood types referred by hospitals.

## Pharmaceutical Affairs

By the end of 2020, a total of 33,415 kinds of western medicine had been approved by the Health Bureau for sale in the local market; of these, 10,816 were over-the-counter medicines, 20,714 were prescription medicines and 1,885 could only be used by hospitals. A total of 7,448 kinds of Chinese and traditional medicine were licensed for sale in the local market. There were 710 pharmacists and 299 pharmacy technicians registered with the Health Bureau. There were 155 licensed wholesale stores with authorisation from the Health Bureau for conducting pharmaceutical import and export business. There were 283 licensed pharmaceutical stores, 130 Chinese herbal stores, 22 pharmaceutical dealers and seven pharmaceutical factories.

## Private Healthcare Services

In 2020, there were 3,656 health care professional licensees, 407 health care establishments and three centres registered under the Health Bureau, constituting a total of 4,066 issuances of private health care licences, representing an increase of 4.28 percent as compared to the figure in 2019.

The number of health care establishments increased 6.27 percent. The increases were highest for licences issued for nurses, therapists, and Chinese medicine practitioners, which rose by 95, 29 and 17 licences, respectively.

## 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 150-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 2020, the hospital had 2,160 staff: 377 doctors, 616 nurses, 217 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), as well as a number of medical centres. 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 2020, its emergency and outpatient departments treated over 1,258,628 patients, an average of 3,824 each day. Its emergency department and outpatient department on the Macao peninsula treated over 1,147,549 patients during 2020, an average of around 3,470 per day; the Taipa Medical Centre received patients seeking emergency and outpatient services on 111,079 occasions, an average of 354 patients per day. A total of 27,620 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, the Faculty of Medicine and the School of Pharmacy of the MUST, becoming 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 42 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 5,311 complaints in 2020.

During January and February 2022, the Municipal Affairs Bureau dispatched personnel to support the hotline operation at the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Centre, in accordance with the Government's anti-pandemic arrangements. During the pandemic, the Municipal Affairs Bureau assisted the Health Bureau in arranging the 14-day quarantine for people entering Macao.

Aligning with the Health Bureau's pandemic prevention work, the Municipal Affairs Bureau thoroughly cleaned and disinfected the buildings where there were confirmed COVID-19 cases and neighbouring public streets. The Municipal Affairs Bureau also commenced a special project with local organisations, to conduct sanitation inspections and advocacy work in buildings and housing estates in various districts. During the year, the Municipal Affairs Bureau inspected 5,929 buildings, coordinated cleaning work 323 times and cleared up 3,446 kilogrammes of garbage.

In response to the country's pandemic prevention guidelines and the local prevention measures initiated following risk assessments, the Municipal Affairs Bureau continued strengthening preventive measures related to imported cold chain food, including environments and employees – especially inspections, monitoring and disinfection at ports. In 2020, over 15,000 samples of imported cold chain food, internal and external packaging, storage environments and equipment underwent coronavirus nucleic acid tests.

In 2020, the Municipal Affairs Bureau released five food safety guidelines related to COVID-19, and launched a special web page on the Food Safety Information website, providing pandemic prevention guidelines, publicity and educational information for the food industry and the public, as well as an operational platform aligning with preventive measures for the cold chain food industry.

In 2020, the Municipal Affairs Bureau developed the Advance Booking System for Visiting Green Facilities, to effectively control the flow of IAM facility users.

In February 2020, the Municipal Affairs Bureau called on the catering industry through mobile phone text messages, to comply with the pandemic prevention guidelines formulated by Health Bureau, to enhance public confidence in resuming consumption at food and beverage establishments.

## 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 tree burial services in September 2014 and September 2015, respectively. In 2020, the bureau conducted 101 bone cremations and 49 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 82 fixed and three portable public toilets, distributed across various districts and open to citizens and tourists free of charge.

## **Environmental Protection and Clean City Education**

### **Environment Information Centre**

Macao originally had two environment information and education centres: the Flora Garden Environment Information Centre and the Mong Ha Environment Information Centre. The Flora Garden Environment Information Centre had to be demolished due to the Lands, Public Works and Transport Bureau's plan for construction of the Guia pedestrian tunnel, and ceased opening to public on 5 March 2020. The Mong Ha Environment Information Centre continued providing space for environmental education for schools, groups, and the public, regularly organising workshops and activities for schools and groups. In 2020, the two centres received 13,486 visitors.

### **Volunteers for Clean-up Campaign**

In November 2012, the volunteer team "Friends of Macao City" was established. 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 opened during Green Week in 2005, having a total area of around 133,868 square meters. The farm is one of the places in Macao where livestock (pigs, cattle, and sheep) can be seen. 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. It is one of few organic farms and education sites in Macao.

Oscar Farm first opened to the public in August 2020. It is a good place for local residents and tourists to enjoy a relaxing holiday, free of charge.

It has facilities including leisure huts, camp sites, alfresco and large arbours, farming plots, a wildlife pond and a natural well. The Municipal Affairs Bureau accepts online group applications every year for short-term and two-day-one-night camping activities, during which participants can

experience harvests and share organic crops. Through introductory activities such as guided tours, group activities, parties and workshops, participants can enjoy more fun in organic farming and gain authentic farm experiences by becoming “farm owners” who lead simple lives working from sunrise to sunset, to immerse themselves in nature.

## **Happy Farm**

Happy Farm opened in 2016, and has a total area of 5,972 square metres. After expansion work that commenced in mid 2020, the total area is now 22,995 square metres. Expanded facilities include arable land, which accounts for one-third of the whole farm. It provides an activity venue for hands-on experience of organic farming. The environment is a green farming area, with an aromatic herb garden, a flower field area that changes through the seasons, a fruit tree garden with various species of fruit trees, a display area for seasonal vegetables, a natural water conservation area and an insect museum – 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 expanded farm is near Hac-Sa Beach, adjacent to Hac Sa Park. It opened to the public in November 2020, and is an ideal place for families to enjoy suburban activities on weekends, free of charge.

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. All farming activities can be applied for online, by individuals or groups. Successful applicants only need to pay a small administrative fee to join various greening workshops, and bring the products home; or become “city farmers” for four months. They can access the farm for planting and taking care of their crops every day. Participants can enjoy pure organic farming and their own harvests.

## **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 foodstuffs, such as livestock, meat, vegetables, fresh fruits and fishery products, food products originating from animals, and fresh but perishable products. These inspections are conducted at the Border Gate and Lotus Flower Bridge Checkpoint, Ilha Verde quarantine station, wholesale markets, the Slaughter House, piers, Ka Ho Harbour, the airport and other quarantine points.

The Municipal Affairs Bureau has strengthened its product quality inspection and control measures. It has also made sample inspection procedures for imported livestock and foodstuffs more stringent, in order to prevent outbreaks of infectious diseases. All imported foodstuffs – including vegetables, fish, fresh and frozen meat, eggs, fruits and canned goods – must now be inspected, quarantined and tested for residual pesticides. In addition, 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.

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 2020, 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, Regulatory Standard for the Use of Food Colouring, 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, 54 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 2020, three sampling tests on seasonal foods – Chinese New Year confectionery, sticky rice dumplings of the Dragon Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival mooncakes – were conducted, and the pass rate was 100 percent. Three sampling tests were also conducted: an investigation of the content of heavy metals and mycotoxins in foods for infants and young children; an investigation of pathogenic microorganisms of roast food, braised food and Chinese cold dishes; and a special investigation of barbecued foods. For each, the pass rate was 100 percent. Routine sampling tests on food sold on the market were conducted throughout the year, with 2,575 samples tested, achieving a pass rate of 99.8 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 2020, 44 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 2020, the Bureau focused on guiding the industry to effectively manage corporate pandemic prevention and food safety, and requiring the industry to strictly implement various cold chain food pandemic prevention arrangements. During the year, 130 talks and outdoor advocacy activities, 14 seminars and visits regarding potential food safety risks, and 10 Food Hygiene Supervisor Courses were organised for the industry; and regular monthly Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene Basic Courses were organised. To educate the public about food safety risks, in 2020, the bureau continued organising food safety education talks, establishing a total of 25 themes in three categories: risk prevention, risk awareness, and food and nutrition. In all, 183 seminars and activities were organised for the public.

To support the annual Food Safety Day in 2020, with the theme “Everyone is responsible for food safety”, the Municipal Affairs Bureau launched an online game with prizes, titled “Five Tips for Food Safety”, to increase public awareness of food safety through a series of educational activities.

## 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, the Municipal Affairs Bureau vaccinated 6,939 dogs and 545 cats against rabies for 3 years, issued 9,925 dog licences, and captured 420 stray dogs and 353 stray cats in 2020. It also prosecuted 622 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 2020 a total of 409 carcasses were collected. It also collected faecal samples at the habitats of migratory birds and aviaries for avian flu screening, and in 2020 a total of 851 wild bird carcasses and faecal samples were screened. Results of all such screenings were negative and no avian flu virus was found.

To enhance veterinary health in Macao and support the implementation of Law No. 4/2016—Animal Protection Law, the Government formulated Law No. 7/2020—Animal Pandemic Prevention Law, legally stipulating the control measures for preventing and responding to the risk of spreading animal diseases. The related law and Executive Order No. 160/2020—List of Animal Epizootic diseases came into effect on 1 September 2020; meanwhile, the bureau was drafting the bill on Veterinary, Animal Diagnosis and Treatment Activities and Business Involving Animals.

## 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 2020, 752 market stalls were rented on a monthly basis, involving a total of 1,832 operators, of whom 746 were stall tenants, 60 temporary mobile stall licensees, 427 were stall assistants and 599 were employees. The Municipal Affairs Bureau is responsible for wet market management and tenant management.

The current legislation on public markets and the hawker management system has been employed for many years in Macao. Aligning with the development of society, at the beginning of 2020, when the coronavirus outbreak started, the Government strived to provide the public with a market management method compatible with the current situation as soon as possible. The Executive Council completed discussions on the Public Wet Markets Management Regime Law in November, and the Law passed its first reading in the same month. The Municipal Affairs Bureau is now drafting related by-law and working guidelines, implementing publicity and promotion of the standardised weights and measures system, and conducting tests on smart electronic scales, as planned.



## **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 2020, the bureau issued 950 hawkers' licences, including 182 cooked food stall licences and 72 special permits to flower hawkers from Wanzai District of Zhuhai – 48 less licences or 5.32 percent less than in 2019.

## **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 2020, the Slaughter House butchered 1,642 head of cattle and 79,396 pigs; 81,038 in total.

## **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. There are 12 social service facilities under its umbrella, providing direct services to citizens, including the Social Services Centres, a casualty centre for victims of disasters, Assessment Centre for Rehabilitation, Drug Treatment Centres (Methadone), Healthy Life Education Centre and Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment Division–The Resilience Centre Chi Ai Hin (Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment).

In 2020, 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 99,472 eligible cases (including 2,584 backdated cases from prior years), and the allowances amounted to 895 million 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 2020, for a total of 15,966 eligible cases (including 1,281 backdated cases of prior years), involving a total of 194 million patacas.

In 2020, the Social Welfare Bureau subsidised 257 social service organisations/facilities/programmes, involving over 4,200 workers and a total of 1.584 billion patacas. Overall, the Social Welfare Bureau spent 2.979 billion patacas on social services in 2020, representing an increase of 4.83 percent over the previous year, including the various subsidies mentioned above, as well as assistances and benefits.

During the pandemic, the Social Welfare Bureau (IAS) issued various pandemic prevention guidelines provided by the Health Bureau to 240 social service facilities, completed a pandemic prevention plan and conducted a desk-top exercise. In February 2020, the IAS coordinated the suspension of operation of all nurseries, and community and day social service facilities in Macao until gradual resumption of operations in June. In March and September 2020, the IAS released an extra full grant of financial aid to beneficiary families, as compensation for the extra expenditure resulting from the pandemic. In all, 5,900 families benefited, with subsidies totalling 32 million patacas.

The IAS strengthened emotional support to citizens by providing psychological counselling services via hotlines and video counselling. By the end of December, 669 cases were handled. In addition, the IAS coordinated with social service facilities to provide senior citizens and disabled persons with home support services, including home delivery of meals, household cleaning and personal care, serving around 5,700 people. Caring and consultation were also provided through telephone calls, home visits and online communication, serving some 300,000 people.

The IAS coordinated several departments to deliver donations from various sectors of society to the needy and disadvantaged groups. The IAS and social service organisations supported mask selling, and deployed the five social work centres to assist over 9,000 people to register and deliver electronic consumer cards; coordinated 70 social service organisations to help people in need with health code conversions; opened eight IAS venues and introduced phone numbers to provide consultations and assistance regarding health code conversions and nucleic acid test bookings to residents including senior citizens who were unfamiliar with online operation. By the end of December, 30,230 people were served.

The IAS has been supporting temporary medical examination centres, providing material support and counselling services. By the end of December, the IAS assisted in the handling and delivery of around 810,000 materials; and produced six promotional videos and six packages with images and text.

## **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 general services, including 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 2020, a total of 3,388 cases were handled by four social services centres and one branch centre, and various services were provided on 9,554 occasions, resulting in 3,364 families receiving regular subsidies, involving 5,127 individuals.

In 2020, Macao had one public shelter, 10 integrated family and community service centres, 12 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 2020, 28 people were admitted to the Ilha Verde shelter; 310 people used the winter and heat shelter services. The 10 integrated family and community services centres provided services to 1,058,377 people; the 12 community centres provided services to 844,602 people; 12 project-based services were provided to 1,245,039 people, and the five shelters and temporary shelters provided services for 412 people.

To enhance welfare recipients' incentives to work and assist them to re-enter the labour market, the IAS and four non-governmental organisations cooperated in implementing the Community Employment Assistance Scheme. By the end of 2020, the scheme had 588 participants. Additionally, by the end of 2020, the Positive Life Programme, which was launched to encourage employment, attracted participation by 1,071 individuals, 421 of whom had already received employment counselling and accepted job referrals.

In 2020, the IAS received 2,651 cases involving enquiries and notifications/requests for assistance through the Family Crisis Hotline. After eliminating duplicate cases, 1,787 cases were identified, including 1,249 involving family disputes, family conflicts and initial suspected domestic violence, and 538 other cases. A total of 38 cases of suspected domestic violence were assessed and identified, 23 of which involved spouses, ten involved children, one involved the elderly and four involved violence between other family members.

## **Children's and Youth Services**

In 2020, Macao had 66 child-care centres, 41 of which received regular subsidies from the Social Welfare Bureau. By December 2020, child-care services in Macao offered 10,138 quotas. One of the centres was funded by the bureau, and provided parent-child centre services to 4,016 people during 2020, 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 full-day service 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 2020, these homes housed 299 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 2020, 11,443 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 2020, the centres had 27,352 members enjoying these services.

The Social Welfare Bureau is the only authorised organisation in Macao that deals with adoption services. It handled 12 such cases in 2020. The bureau is responsible for providing assistance to minors who become involved in judicial actions, in accordance with the social protection system. During 2020, the bureau processed 295 such cases in total. 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.

## Services for the Elderly

For ongoing improvement of living conditions of the elderly, the Social Welfare Bureau continued providing subsidies and technical support to community groups and organisations in 2020, 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 2018, 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.

The interdepartmental steering group on Macao's retirement protection mechanism commenced 141 of the medium-term measures (2018-2020) under the Plan for the Elderly Services for 2016-2025. The measures were implemented and completed in full, ahead of schedule, in October 2020.

In 2020, Macao had 23 homes for the elderly, providing residential care services for weak elderly persons; 13 of them are subsidised by the Social Welfare Bureau, providing around 2,500 hostel places. In addition, there were six elderly service facilities providing day-care services to elderly persons with health problems who are unable to take care of themselves. There were nine other elderly day-care centres, and 25 neighbourhood social centres providing entertainment services for the elderly.

In 2020, 1,933 senior citizens were housed in homes for the elderly, 560 senior citizens enjoyed services at day care centres, 6,258 senior citizens enjoyed services at elderly day centres, and 6,276 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 2020, a total of 1,236 cases were handled, of which 453 involved senior citizens living alone, and 783 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 2020, the two services were provided to 3,729 and 934 senior citizens, respectively.

The Tele-Assistant “Peng On Tung” is a round-the-clock support service through home fixed line telephones, providing emotional support, regular greetings, community information service, referral services and regular visits. There is also an elderly hotline service, which provided assistance to 5,134 senior citizens in need during 2020, of whom 2,229 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 2020, household safety instructions were given to 825 households, and equipment was installed in 809 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 2020, the Social Welfare Bureau had issued a cumulative total of 85,248 Senior Citizen’s Cards.

## **Rehabilitation Services**

The mid-term measures (2018 to 2020) under the Ten-year Plan of Rehabilitation Services 2016-2025 were commenced. The total number of mid-term measures was increased from 125 to 130. Among them, five were of the long-term phase but completed ahead of schedule together with the mid-term measures. By December 2020, the 130 measures were implemented and completed in full.

In 2020, 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 10 day centres which provide self-training programmes, 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 2020, the 11 rehabilitation homes provided services to 745 people, while the 10 day care



centres offered services to 1,899 people. One non-subsidised day activity centre provided services to 211 people.

In 2020, there were six sheltered workshops, vocational training centres and supported employment centres in Macao. Services were provided to 389 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 2020, the four pre-schools/education centres served 425 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, the physically disabled 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 2020, the two agencies served 29,584 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 2020 served 21 people by providing independent living skills training; and providing family resources services to the mentally handicapped and their families, with 10,854 people served in 2020.

The other centre is a comprehensive rehabilitation service centre providing vocational training and rehabilitation services which served 125 people in 2020. 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 105 cases of providing these services in 2020.

As at the end of 2020, the Disability Assessment Cards attracted 24,061 new applications and 9,588 renewal applications, and 18,894 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 community groups in organising anti-drug activities.

In 2020, 5,327 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, bringing out the messages of anti-drugs and healthy life. A total of 3,852 people participated in its activities. The Healthy Life Education programme, which was conducted especially for students aged from 5 years to 12 years, attracted participation by 7,847 primary school students from 31 schools, while

an education programme targeting junior secondary school students attracted participation by 1,231 junior secondary school students from six secondary schools.

The IAS subsidised organisations to hold the Macao College Students Healthy Campus 2020 promotion activities, with 111 trainings and activities were organised serving 5,442 participants. The IAS also distributed 12 messages about drug abuse prevention reaching 9,389 students through tertiary institutions and social platform groups.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the launch of Health Life Education in Macao, the IAS and non-governmental institutions jointly organised a series of activities attracting participation by some 35,000 people.

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 2020, a total of 455 drug addicts sought help, 95 of whom were seeking help for the first time.

In 2020, there were two drug-treatment rehabilitation service shelters, providing inpatient treatment services to 58 people; an outreach treatment service for drug-dependent youths; and two outreach treatment services for addicts in Macao. The outreach drug addiction treatment services were used by 8,319 people; outreach services designed for drug-dependent youngsters and problem juveniles were used by 1,530 people; and services designed for the family members of drug addicts were provided to 484 people. In 2020, the Bureau cooperated with a non-governmental institution to commence a youth employment assistance and family support programme, organising nine training courses with attendance by 210 people, providing internships for 52 participants, 18 of whom were employed, and providing a range of support to 255 family members.

In addition, a free outpatient service to help people quit smoking provided services to 66 people.

To strengthen the follow-up support for rehabilitated drug abusers reintegrating into society, the IAS cooperated with private organisations to launch special community support and career planning projects, including the Methadone Case Support Programme in 2020. The IAS also cooperated with the Cultural Affairs Bureau to launch the “Hold On To Hope” Vocational Training Internship Programme and the Drug Abused Youth Support Programme.

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 which attracted participation by 119 people, to further consolidate cooperation and exchanges with relevant 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 and the WeChat public account “Smart Parents”. In 2020, the IAS also jointly launched the Go Go Goal mobile app with non-governmental organisations, to integrate network resources for sharing information about drug abuse prevention and treatment.

## **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 2020, the Central Registry System of Individuals with Gambling Disorders received 77 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 1,168 and 2,157 requests for assistance through telephone calls and online platforms, respectively.

To strengthen community education, nine community talks regarding prevention of gambling disorder were organised, and attended by 301 participants.

The centre collaborated with community organisations in launching the Smart Money Management Programme, and organised 72 classroom sessions for 1,774 students. Starting from 2020, the IAS is subsidising “Bosco Youth Service Freeland” of the Bosco Youth Service Network, to implement secondary preventive work for young people, focusing on gambling disorders. During the year, 22 sessions were organised, serving 579 participants and reaching 49,147 viewers online.

To promote responsible gaming, the IAS, the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau and the University of Macau held a series of activities with the theme “Lose Control, Lose Family”, including a press conference, a series of advertising and promotional activities, an interactive game on WeChat, a community activity programme and a sharing session upon completion.

An interactive game on WeChat, “Responsible Gaming Maze”, attracted 9,578 players. Regarding the community activity programme, the IAS subsidised gambling disorder prevention and treatment agencies to hold events for promoting responsible gaming and family education, which were attended by some 28,000 people and reached more than 90,000 people online. At the sharing session upon completion on responsible gaming promotion in 2020, gaming operators and social service agencies were invited to share the results of the promotional activities. In addition, four “community version” responsible gambling online information kiosks were added during 2020. The 55 kiosks recorded 9,739 user logins.

The IAS commissioned the Institute for the Study of Commercial Gaming of the University of Macau to commence the Responsible Gaming Awareness Survey 2020. The results revealed that the awareness level of citizens aged 18 or above regarding responsible gaming increased from 16.2 percent in 2009 to 64.4 percent in 2020.

## Social Rehabilitation Services

Provided mainly by the Social Welfare Bureau, social rehabilitation services assist the court to implement 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 2020, 664 and 135 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 23 and 20 people, respectively.

In order to execute each non-custodial penalties/measure effectively, the IAS established three systematic correction course and activities in 2020: the Life College, Legal College and Leading College. The Life College is for discharged offenders; the Legal College is for young offenders; and the leading College is for offenders involved in crimes of special nature. In 2020, 188 correction course and activities were held and attended by 1,704 people.

## **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. 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 have the chance to 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 the contributions of employees, employers and arbitrary contributors, employment fees for non-resident workers, 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, 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 2020, a total of 361,000 beneficiaries made their contributions. They included around 296,000 employees and 65,000 voluntary contributors (including in-service public servants registered in the retirement and pension system). The contributions totalled around 390 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 2020, various benefits were given to 132,000 people, 123,000 of whom received pensions. Besides, allowances were given to 25,000 people. Social security payments totalled about 5.1 billion patacas, including around 4.56 billion patacas for pensions (including the 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 an allocation system and a contribution 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.

## Allocation Scheme

If the Government’s budget implementation in previous fiscal years allows, account holders who are alive on 1 January in the allocation year, and meet the following requirements within the year prior to the allocation at the same time, are eligible for the Special Allocation from the Budget Surplus:

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

Account holders who initially fulfil the above requirements may receive a one-off Incentive Basic



Fund of 10,000 patacas and 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 account or preserved sub-account for investment through proper transfer application.

In 2020, there were 603,000 Provident Fund Individual Account holders, of whom 387,000 fulfilled the requirements for receiving the fund allocation. The Government paid 7,000 patacas to each of the entitled residents. Those who also received an Incentive Basic Fund of 10,000 patacas totalled about 11,000 people. At the end of 2020, the maximum accumulated appropriation and interest income of an account holder's sub-account managed by the Government were 77,000 and 9,910 patacas, respectively (the interest income in 2020 was distributed in January 2021).

## **Contribution Scheme**

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 Minimum Wage for Workers.

In 2020, 247 employers and a total of around 23,000 employees joined the non-mandatory CPF scheme; and about 61,000 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 2020, there were seven fund management entities providing 41 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.

## **Fund Withdrawal**

To meet the objective of providing 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 2020, there were 82,000 approved applications for withdrawals, resulting in a disbursement of 1.34 billion patacas.

## **Special Measures during the Pandemic**

In January 2020, the Government announced measures for prevention and control of COVID-19. As this was also the month for contributions to the social security system for the fourth quarter of

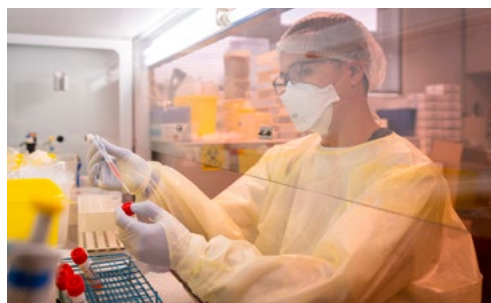
2019, and employment fees for non-local employees and casual workers in December 2019, it was decided the deadline of the contribution period for the Social Security Fund would be extended to 28 February, with exemption from related deferred interest and fines; subsequently, the deadline was further extended to 16 March 16, to avoid gathering of crowds. The processing of Proof of Life certificates for pensions and disability allowance receivers was extended to the end of March, while payment in April was unaffected.

Meanwhile, the service arrangements for the Social Security Fund were adjusted, including through providing limited services at designated locations and encouraging citizens to apply for social security services through electronic methods.





**Nucleic acid testing**



The Public Health Laboratory of Health Bureau is responsible for handling emergencies related to public health; monitoring the quality of food, water, drugs and tobacco; prevention and diagnosis of infectious diseases; and providing efficient and quality-guaranteed examination services. During the anti-pandemic journey, the Public Health Laboratory worked incessantly to increase its nucleic acid testing abilities through improving equipment, personnel training and increased purchase of reagents. On 7 May 2020, as testing areas were expanding, the Health Bureau started to join hands with private screening organisations, to raise the daily screening capacity to 6,000 people, contributing to the normalisation of anti-pandemic prevention and control.



