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[Message from Doctor]
## Doctors and Patients Leverage on eHealth to Combat Heart Disease Together

Heart disease, being the world's top killer[1] and the third commonest fatal disease in Hong Kong[2], must not be neglected! It is a common belief that heart disease is an invisible killer that catches people off guard. In fact, according to an international study, 90% of heart attack worldwide were collectively attributed to nine manageable risk factors, including smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, unhealthy eating habits, lack of exercise, abdominal obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, suboptimal blood lipid levels, and stress[3]. In other words, heart disease can be effectively prevented by practising healthy living habits as well as regular health monitoring and management.

Dr Chan Chi Yuen, Karl

In this issue of eHealth News, we invited Dr Chan Chi Yuen, Karl, who had worked in public hospitals for 18 years and joined the private market, as a consultant in cardiology, in early 2021, to share his clinical experience and insights in both public and private hospitals and shed light on how doctors and patients can make good use of the Electronic Health Record Sharing System (eHealth) to prevent and treat heart disease.

Continuous Health Data Recording for Health Monitoring by Doctors and Patients Together
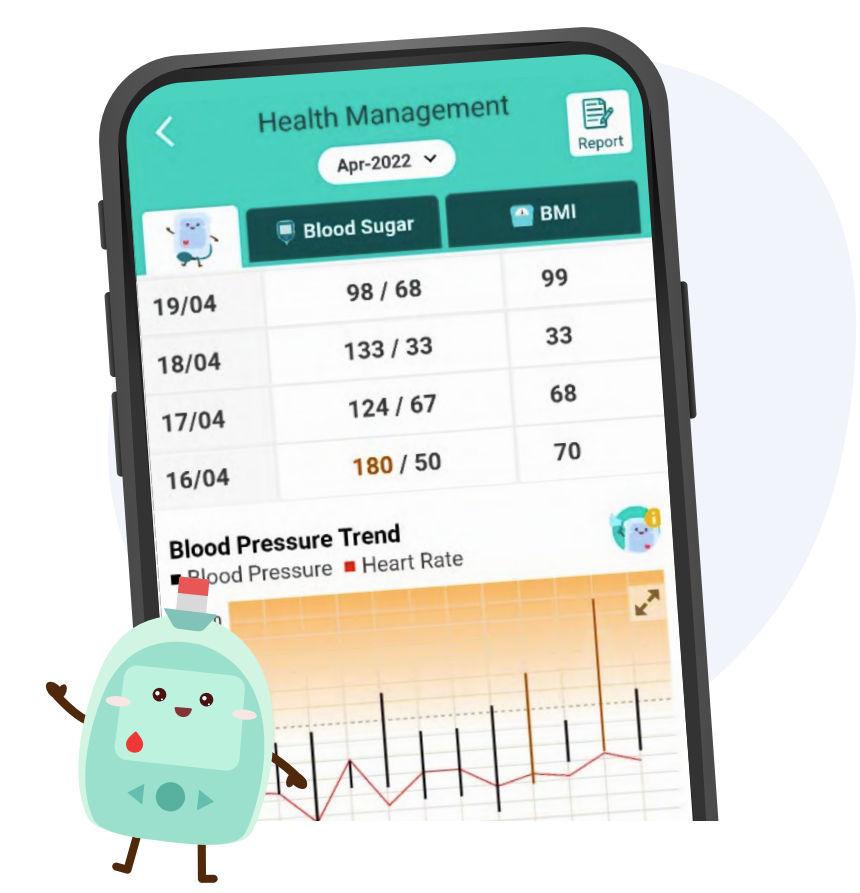
A stressful working environment, lack of sleep, and physical inactivity, combined with a high-fat and high-sodium diet, put the Hong Kong people at risk for heart disease. Leveraging technology to actively manage personal health helps better detect the early signs of illness. Dr Chan said, "Most heart diseases develop over time. Blood vessels become narrowed, blocked or thickened with age may cause heart disease. However, the symptoms may be not obvious at the early stage that patients will easily overlook them, missing the golden period for medical treatment. If patients can develop habits to record and monitor their vital signs, say blood pressure, blood sugar, and weight, regularly via the 醫健通eHealth App (App), they will be reminded of living an healthy lifestyle to prevent heart disease. In addition, continuous health data can also be generated into charts and reports in the App for easy health monitoring, with a view to better understanding their own health. Once any abnormality is observed, they can seek medical advice promptly to prevent deterioration."

Long-term health data facilitate doctors to diagnose and provide treatment advice. For example, doctors have to make reference to the average blood pressure of the patient; the time of blood pressure measurement would also affect the clinical judgement. Dr Chan added, "It is common that "High blood pressure" uttered by most patients is only a one-time measurement. They fail to record daily blood pressure data and measurement time in details that the information is insufficient for doctor to make personalized treatment recommendations. On the contrary, records stored in the App are clear and comprehensive. Other value-added features such as vaccination, adverse drug reactions and allergies records are also available in the App. It is beneficial for doctors to conduct diagnosis, explain the treatment program, prescribe drugs and conduct post-operative assessment for patients, especially the elderly, and their family members."

A Three-win Situation for Patients, Public and Private Healthcare

Dr Chan pointed out that sometimes patients receive healthcare services in both public and private hospitals. eHealth allows two-way sharing of medical histories and appointment records, benefiting both patients and doctors. He explained, "eHealth stored reports from both public and private healthcare necessary for consultation, such as blood test report with patient's measurements blood lipids, cholesterol, kidney and liver functions. It avoids repeated blood tests, saves the medical costs of the patients and hospitals, and also facilitates doctors to prescribe drugs more accurately."

Dr Chan also opined that sharing of appointment records promoted collaboration between the public and private hospitals and therefore enhanced the efficiency of medical services and the effectiveness of the community.

Public hospitals generally require much longer waiting time for medical consultations and it may take over half year for follow-up appointment after surgery. Many patients would visit private hospitals or clinics to receive examinations first that doctors in the private sector can help follow up patients' post-surgery health conditions, adjust the dosage of medication, evaluate the efficacy and side effects of the drugs accordingly. In addition to achieving early recovery for patients, it alleviates the mounting pressure on the public healthcare system through implementing triage of patients between public and private services.

Radiology Image Sharing Supports Clinical Decision Making
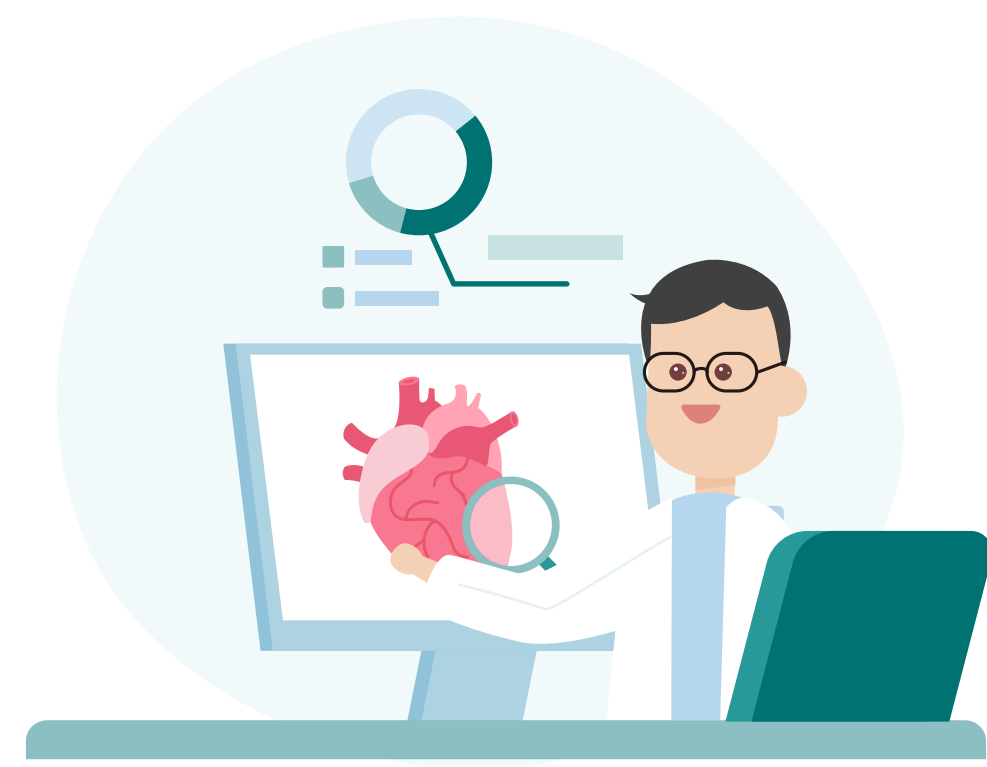
Radiology image has been included in the sharable scope of eHealth since 2021. Such development is critical for heart disease diagnosis and treatment, especially for Dr Chan who often needs to perform complicated surgeries. Dr Chan shared, "Angiography reflects the location and severity of coronary artery disease, which is a crucial information for cardiologist to formulate treatment plan. Without the sharing of radiology images, if the patient neither brings the angiogram from public hospital for consultation at private hospital, nor intends to have another angiography, doctor can hardly provide an accurate clinical recommendation in accordance with the patient's situation." He explained, "Patient often consults different cardiologists for medical advice before determining to undergo a heart surgery. With the aid of radiology images, cardiologists can explain in more details the procedures, risks and benefits of different heart surgeries, such as Percutaneous Coronary Intervention or Coronary Artery Bypass Grafting. It helps enhance patient's confidence in the treatment plan and understanding of own medical condition for choosing the approach that best suits him/her."

Dr Chan hoped that eHealth can become more extensively adopted by the public and more private healthcare providers, including hospitals, clinics, medical laboratories etc. can upload and share patients' health records to the platform, with a view to strengthening the public-private partnership of healthcare services. Furthermore, a more comprehensive health management by both healthcare profession and citizens can be achieved upon the launch of more diverse App features.

References :
[1] https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1127211
[2] https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/statistics/data/10/27/117.html
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【Good News for Young Parents】
eHealth Helps "Sandwich Generation" Take Care of Family's Health

Hong Kong has the highest life expectancy in the world, and the burden of the family caregivers, especially the "sandwich generation" must not be overlooked. The "sandwich generation" generally refers to persons who have to raise minors and take care of elderly parents at the same time. They shoulder the responsibilities of looking after the health of three generations and will be exhausted if both their parents and children need healthcare services at the same time. If eHealth can help them manage their own and family's health, it will surely relieve the stress of these "sandwich generations" as the caregivers.

Electronic Health Record Sharing : a Helping Hand for Healthcare Professionals and Family Caregivers


Michelle, a post-90s mother, has a 2.5-year-old daughter and needs to take care of her parents suffering from hypertension. Michelle registered with eHealth when she was pregnant. She chose to give birth in a private hospital, while most of her prenatal checkups were still carried out in the public hospital. "Generally expectant mothers have to undergo more than ten prenatal checkups. During a prenatal screening for Down's syndrome in the public hospital, a nurse noticed that I had to carry various documents with the growing pregnant belly for both visits in the public and private hospitals.

Therefore, she advised me to register with eHealth, so that my health records such as investigation reports, allergies and adverse drug reactions, clinical notes etc. can be shared between the public and private healthcare providers via eHealth. This could avoid repeated examinations and save costs, as well as enable prompt diagnosis for me from both sectors' healthcare providers," Michelle shared. She also added that the registration process was simpler than expected. Patients can register and verify identity in-person by presenting the identity document during medical consultation at the hospital. "Initially I thought eHealth was only beneficial to doctors' clinical consultation but after downloading the 醫健通eHealth App (App), I realised that it went even further. Apart from accessing my health records, as a family caregiver, I often use the "My Family" module. After adding the information of my parents and kids, I can view their health records, including the allergies, vaccination and appointments records, etc. altogether through the App, thus their health statuses are all at a glance."

### "My Family" Module Assists Caregivers in Taking Care of Their Elderly Parents

Michelle's father is about 70 years old. He underwent a cataract surgery in public hospital a few years ago. He also suffers from hypertension that needs regular follow-up consultation and medication to control his health condition. Michelle shared her father's blooper of the follow-up visits, "my father used to record the appointment dates on a paper calendar, yet he marked the date wrongly and went to the clinic in vain. On another occasion, his appointment slip was not found and the whole family searched everywhere for it desperately. My father always puts family first. After retirement he spends most of his time helping us look after the kids and attending to our needs busily, but neglects to take good care of himself," Michelle said. To avoid repeating the same mistake and reduce the potential errors associated with paper records, Michelle helped her father download the App and added him as "My Family Member" in her own App, so she could keep track of his appointment records and remind him to take medications on time.
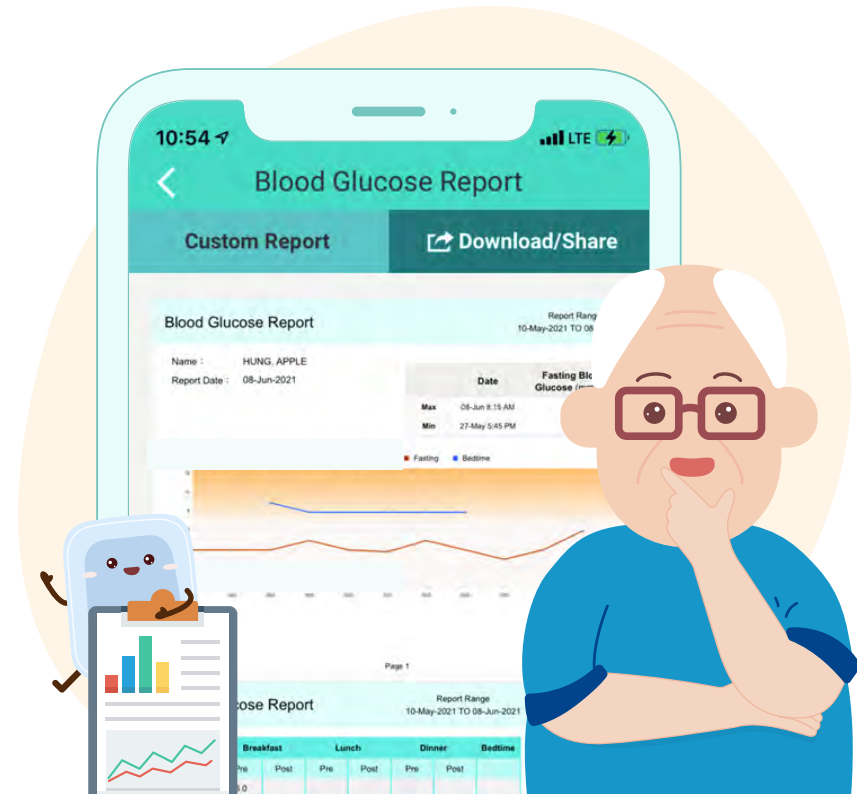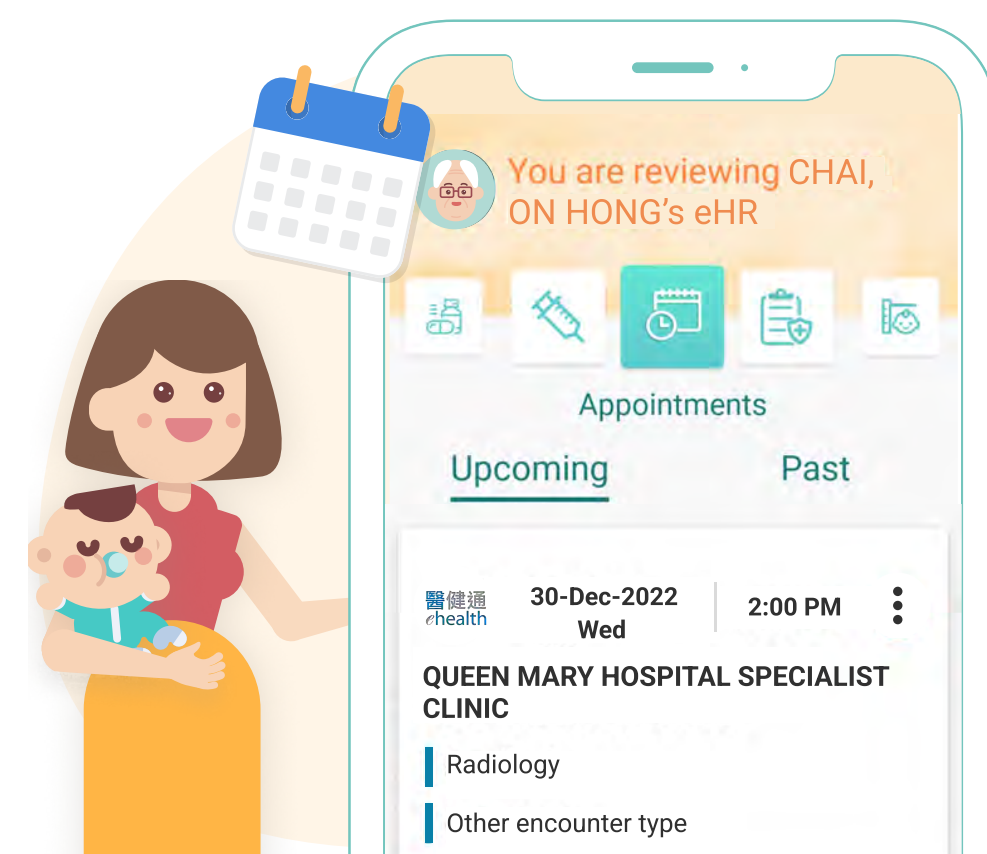
Michelle shared, "Now I can check my father's health records anytime anywhere with the App. Recently, I further recommend my parents to use the "Health Management" module, which integrates electronic records of blood pressure, blood sugar and body mass index into charts via a user-friendly interface. On the one hand, they can monitor their health conditions and present the data to facilitate follow-up by doctors during medical consultations; and on the other, I can keep an eye on any anomaly in their health records at my App." Besides, Michelle also noted that she could view the service details of the health programmes joined by her parents in the "Health Programme" module, such as the remaining balance and transaction history of the Elderly Health Care Voucher. She found those features very practical for supporting users to take care of their parents' health.

Safeguard Children with Life-long Electronic Health Records

Apart from adding parents' accounts, users can insert their children's health records in their own App as well. The "Child Growth Record" module empowers parents to look after their children's health. Parents can input their children's heights and weights to grasp their growth progresses with data analytics generated in the App. Moreover, parents can upload and share photos using the "Growth Album" in the App, recording the sweet moments with children. Michelle said, "Many mothers of newborn love to download different mobile apps to record their children's growth and so do I. On top of using the App to record my child's growth footprints, I can view her health records, such as vaccines and allergies, in one stop. When my daughter attended the kindergarten interview earlier on, I forgot to bring her paper immunisation records. Fortunately, I could show the electronic one immediately via the App, without the need to rush back home for it. Furthermore, a wealth of parenting tips, such as recommendations of solid food and nutrition for infants and young children from healthcare professionals are available in the App. It is much more convenient than looking up the paper health pamphlets."
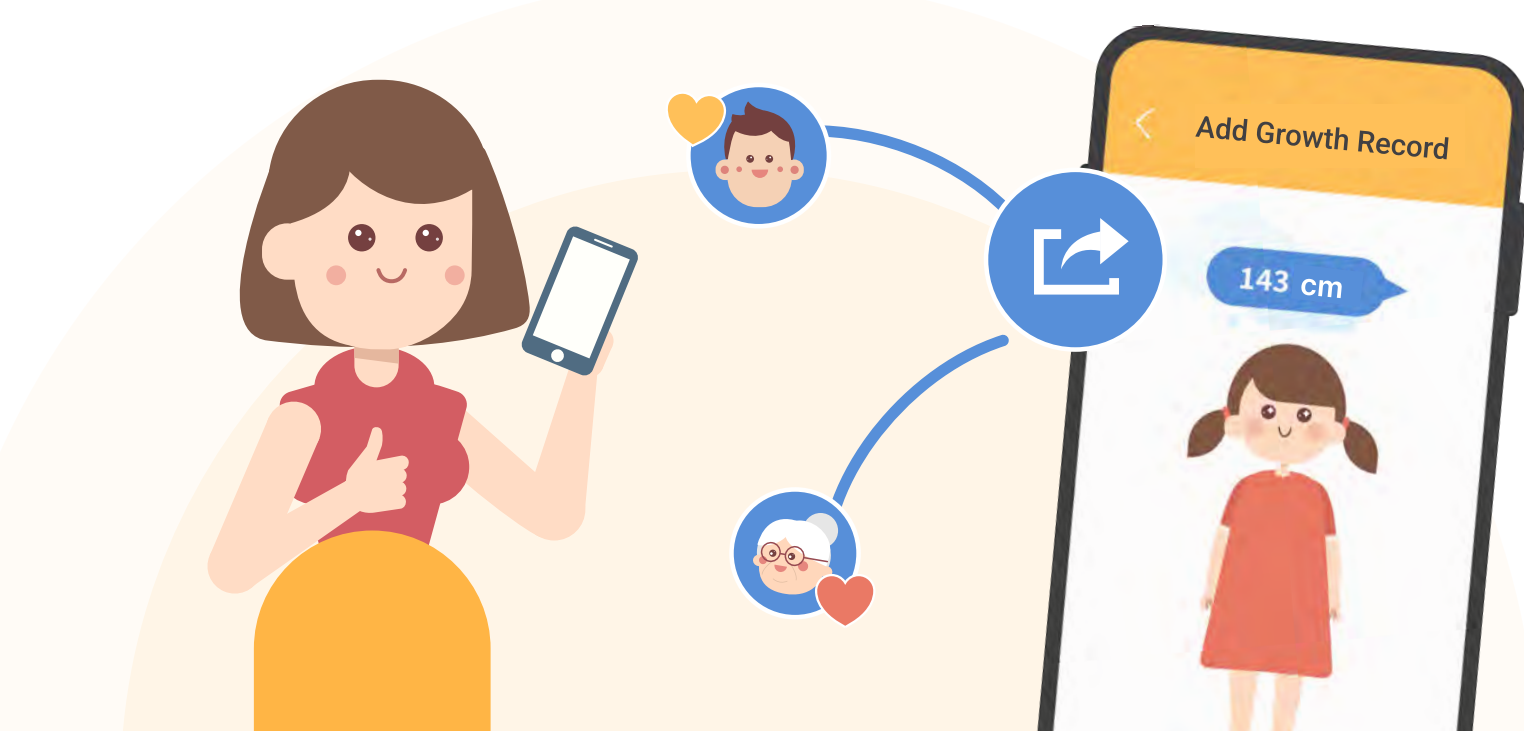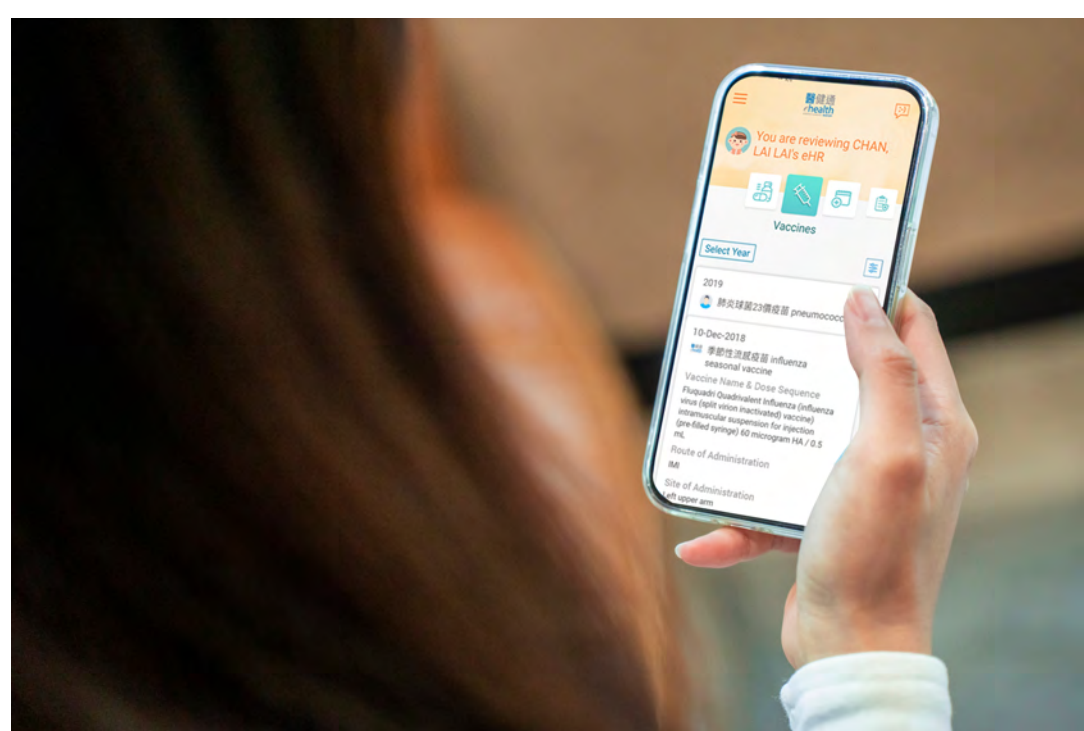
Despite of the enormous pressure on the "sandwich generation" for being the pillar of the whole family, Michelle very much enjoys the sweetness gained from the toil. "It is very busy to do all sorts of household chores and there is so much information we need to remember when looking after parents and children together. With the App, hope that I can take better care of my family, enabling my parents to enjoy their twilight years and my child to grow up healthily." In addition, Michelle expected more private healthcare providers would register with eHealth and actively upload patients' data so as to facilitate the citizens to establish lifelong and more comprehensive health records.

eHealth Updates

After three years of the pandemic, there have been many changes in healthcare services. Electronic Health Record (eHR) is playing a more significant role. Participation in the eHR Sharing System (eHealth) had sustained its growth: by the end of 2022, more than 5.7 million citizens and 2,600 healthcare providers registered with eHealth. The eHR Office continued to publicise and engage the stakeholders in relevant sectors and citizens from different age groups through a variety of promotional activities, with a view to bringing them up-to-date eHealth developments and enhancing their understanding of eHealth to reach a new milestone together.

Mobile Registration Team Provides On-site Registration and App Installation Services

Mobile registration teams had been deployed to the Community Vaccination Centres in various districts since April 2021 to assist citizens in one-stop registration with eHealth, downloading of the 醫健通eHealth App (App) and related inquiries after receiving vaccinations. In addition, the mobile registration teams also provided aforementioned services to Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres in 18 districts and clinics under the Department of Health. For details, please refer to the eHealth website, the official Facebook, or Instagram page.

Promotional Leaflet attached with Water Bill to Encourage Citizens to Measure and Record Health Data Regularly

Since the launch of the App, the number of downloads had already exceeded 2.8 million. To empower users to manage their own health proactively, new features including the Health Management Module, which enabled users to record blood pressure, blood sugar and body mass index, as well as download and share reports via a user-friendly electronic interface, were introduced progressively. To encourage citizens to measure and record their health data on the App regularly, a leaflet was attached with the water bill and distributed to all households in Hong Kong in the first quarter of this year by the Water Supplies Department.

Brand New Souvenirs to Celebrate a Healthy New Year with the Public

To incentivise citizens to register with eHealth and download the App for establishing a lifelong and more comprehensive eHRs, a new series of souvenirs, including spring couplet, measuring tape, eco bag, colour pencil and disinfection spray bottle are readily available. The citizens would receive the special souvenirs upon successful registration and download through the mobile registration team, or through participating in the eHealth Quiz at the eHealth website.

Sharing of Electronic Chinese Medicine Information in eHealth to Improve Healthcare Services

Currently, the sharable scope of eHealth has expanded to cover Chinese Medicine (CM) information including CM diagnosis, CM procedure, and CMs prescribing records. After participating in eHealth with patients' sharing consent, CM sector can share and access patients' records in eHealth so as to provide better healthcare services. A series of events and promotional materials, including webinar, poster and leaflet, promotional video had been launched to promote the patient-centered electronic platform for CM information sharing.

Asia Pacific eHealth Conference (APEHC) 2023 to Promote eHR Sharing

Following the previous participation in the Asia Pacific Electronic Health Record Conference 2019, eHealth would continue to support the upcoming conference to be held in April 2023 to share the experience and collaborate with the industry to foster a better development of eHR sharing. For details, please refer to the conference's official website.