



# Striking a Healthy Balance

**Hong Kong tops Bloomberg’s global healthcare rankings, but behind the accolade the chasm between the public and private sector still exists. Gleneagles is working toward a forward-looking and collaborative approach to healthcare provision.**

– By Dirk Schraven

In 2018, Hong Kong was named the ‘Most Efficient Healthcare System’ in the world by the Bloomberg Health Care Efficiency Index. Using weighted metrics such as life expectancy, and relative and absolute health expenditures, the Bloomberg Health Care Efficiency Index has been ranking nations with average population lifespans of at least 70 years, GDP per-capita exceeding US\$5,000 and a minimum population of 5 million, since 2012.

This is not the first time that Hong Kong has topped the chart. In fact, since the index’s inception, the city has always achieved a high ranking. So why have such high accolades under Hong Kong’s belt not resonated with what the public is experiencing?

The reality is Hong Kong is tackling an ageing population domestically, as well as an influx of

overseas patients. Excellent, qualified doctors practice in both the public and private sectors, however, the public sector is constantly overwhelmed. Part of the cause is the fact that Hong Kongers can

enjoy treatment at a highly subsidised rate of up to 95%, through government hospitals and clinics. This is set against the backdrop that private healthcare institutions are often known for lack of price certainty and transparency, steep healthcare inflation, as well as a general opaque quality of clinical outcomes and governance.

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***As one of the newest entrants to the Hong Kong private healthcare sector, Gleneagles is taking the lead, introducing all-inclusive and fixed-price medical packages.***  
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The Hong Kong government has continuously made various financial pledges to alleviate resourcing pressures in the public space. However, it is clear that a more proportional balance must be achieved between the private and public sector to restore

order in the city's healthcare system. This requires the commitment and cooperation from both arenas, and the Hong Kong government launched the Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme (VHIS) on 1 April 2019 to kick-start innovative collaborations between key players, such as hospitals, clinics and insurers. The initiative is designed to enhance the quality and certainty of insurance protection, with the ultimate goal of rebuilding public confidence in private healthcare services.

### Transparency and collaboration as the way forward for sustainable healthcare

As one of the newest entrants to the Hong Kong private healthcare sector, Gleneagles Hospital Hong Kong (Gleneagles) is taking the lead, introducing all-inclusive and fixed-price medical packages. Each medical package covers all fees typically expected from the day of initial consultation to the day of discharge. Covering the doctor's fee, room and board, operating theatre charges to meals during the prescribed length of stay, packages are also competitively priced to satisfy Hong Kong's middle class. Fixed package prices offer insurance and VHIS policy holders additional price certainty and transparency, as patients will know upfront how much out-of-pocket is required, if any. Furthermore, Gleneagles also offers fee advisory services to non-package patients, during which the patient receives an accurate fee estimate before admission.

Private institutions should be encouraged to collaborate with insurance companies and public stakeholders. By working with insurance companies, Gleneagles has been able to achieve either full or close-to-full coverage of the medical packages, and it will continue to explore deeper collaboration with major insurers to provide more solutions that will fit well with VHIS and benefit



all parties involved. Gleneagles is also in a clinical partnership with The University of Hong Kong to uphold strong clinical governance through better quality assurance and clinical transparency and continuous improvement.

As leaders in this industry, we strive to adapt a more holistic, forward-looking and collaborative approach to healthcare provision. Ultimately, all stakeholders – public or private – need to work together toward a common goal: to provide efficient, equitable, affordable and accessible healthcare to all. Only by meeting and exceeding the healthcare needs of our community will we, as an industry, truly achieve sustainable growth. **B**



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**Gleneagles Hospital  
Hong Kong (Gleneagles)**  
is a state-of-the-  
art private hospital  
committed to providing



**Gleneagles Hospital**  
HONG KONG  
港怡醫院

Hong Kong people with high-quality and accessible healthcare services. Located at Wong Chuk Hang on HK Island South, Gleneagles provides 500 beds and a comprehensive range of clinical services spanning more than 35 specialties and subspecialties. Gleneagles is a joint venture between Parkway Pantai, one of Asia's largest integrated private healthcare groups, and NWS Holdings Limited. The University of Hong Kong is Gleneagles's exclusive clinical partner and is responsible for providing Gleneagles with clinical governance. Gleneagles is the first private hospital in Hong Kong to offer all-inclusive and fixed-price medical packages as part of its efforts to provide price assurance and transparent pricing structure.