

# Press Release



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## **Cigna Study Shows Hong Kong Has the Lowest Health and Well-Being Score Globally During the COVID-19 Crisis**

*Work, finance and physical well-being are key concerns for Hongkongers*

**Hong Kong – June 10, 2020** – Cigna Hong Kong today released the Hong Kong findings of its **Cigna COVID-19 Global Impact Study**. Part of Cigna’s annual 360 Well-Being Survey, this research is the first in a new series of studies from Cigna to better understand the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people’s well-being in eight of Cigna’s markets, including Hong Kong.

The new research suggests that while overall well-being in Hong Kong has remained steady at 57.8 points between January and April 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is lower than the global average point of 62.5, and has the lowest levels of well-being of the eight markets surveyed. In particular, Hong Kong compares unfavorably with its global counterparts in the areas of finance, work-related and physical well-being.

### **Financial worries are paramount**

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, Hong Kong’s financial well-being index has declined by 0.9 point (from 52.7 in January to 51.8 in April 2020), with only 16% of respondents said that their financial well-being was positive. Breaking down the causes of financial worries, only 11% of people in Hong Kong said they have sufficient funds for retirement (down from 14% in January 2020), while only 16% said they have the ability to pay for mortgage/housing. Similarly, just 17% said they have the financial ability to pay for their own or their family’s education. Again, these are the lowest scores across all eight markets, aside from Thailand. Worryingly, only 16% of people in Hong Kong said they have financial security in case of emergencies or if they are unable to work.

Hong Kong still has one of the highest stress levels across all the markets surveyed - 89% of respondents said they were stressed. Unsurprisingly, given the relatively low levels of financial and work-related well-being in Hong Kong, these two areas are the most significant contributors to personal stress. Finances remain the largest source of stress, with 34% attributing this as the cause of their stress (up from 26% in January 2020). Next is work-related stress, which accounts for 24% (up from 19% in January 2020).

Julian Mengual, Chief Executive Officer, South East Asia & Regional Health Solutions at Cigna, said: “Personal finance remains a key driver of stress in Hong Kong. We have seen this intensify during the COVID-19 pandemic, with people feeling insecure about their longer-term financial security. We understand that people may worry about losing their job or income if they are infected with COVID-19 and have to take significant time off work to recover. In order to support people in Hong Kong during

these challenging times, Cigna is providing free coverage to our Hong Kong resident customers in the unfortunate event when they are hospitalized due to COVID-19<sup>1</sup>. This includes three monthly cash payments to help take away some of their financial burden so they can focus on their recovery. As a global health service leader, we are making healthcare more accessible by extending Cigna Telehealth Service that brings together doctors from across Hong Kong and puts them at your fingertips in a virtual clinic, which allows you to book and consult with your preferred doctor from the comfort of your home or office. Cigna Telehealth Service provides a virtual consultation and medication delivery service so customers do not need to visit a clinic in person, thus avoiding lengthy waiting times and reducing the chances of infection at a crowded clinic.”

### **More than half of Hong Kong respondents said working from home made their work day longer**

While flexible working has increased for Hong Kong workers, this has not necessarily resulted in a positive change. The survey finds 61% of Hong Kong working professionals were provided an option to work from home during the COVID-19 outbreak but only 58% of them agreed working from home has made their work day more flexible (compared to a 76% globally), and 55% of respondents said working from home has made their work day longer.

When it comes to workload/working hours, job stability, career development and work-life balance, Hong Kong fared the worst out of all markets surveyed. Only 43% of Hong Kong respondents said they had a good work-life balance, while just 33% said their workload and working hours are reasonable (down from 37% in January 2020). The survey also finds 72% of Hong Kong respondents are experiencing ‘Always on’ working (up from 67% in January 2020).

“As an active health and well-being partner, we understand the importance of mental health, especially during times of stress, and we are committed to supporting the mental well-being of our customers. Cigna Hong Kong’s HealthFirst Elite Medical Plan provides benefits for psychiatric inpatient and outpatient treatment<sup>2</sup>. Customers can also access our ‘Employee Assistance Programme’, a 24-hour service hotline where they can talk to qualified and experienced counselors, social workers and clinical psychologists who can help identify, potentially prevent, and resolve personal, psychological, social, family or work-related issues,” added Mengual.

### **Physical well-being still a concern for Hong Kong**

In general, people in Hong Kong score low when it comes to physical health. Only 17% of respondents said they are at a healthy weight (compared to a 28% average of across all eight markets surveyed), while just 14% said they are getting enough physical exercise (down from 17% in January 2020). Similarly, only 23% said they are getting sufficient sleep at night, compared to an average of 34% globally. Energy levels in Hong Kong is 19%, which is the lowest out of all eight markets.

### **Demand for virtual health grows rapidly**

The survey also finds appetite for virtual health has also grown rapidly in Hong Kong. 61% of people said they were likely to use virtual health if it is an option for consultation or diagnosis, compared to 45% in 2019. The most popular usage of virtual health in Hong Kong is for general practitioner appointments, with 57% of respondents said they would use e-health for these in future. The second most popular usage is for well-being improvements such as lifestyle coaching, with 49% of respondents said they would use

this in the future. Other prominent usages include delivery of prescriptions (42%) and mental health support (39%).

Cigna's 360 Well-Being Survey has tracked perceptions about health and well-being, including an index covering physical, family, social, financial and work well-being since 2014. This edition engaged 10,204 people across China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Spain, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States between January and April 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. 1,000 respondents came from Hong Kong. All the five indices in Hong Kong have shown it to have the lowest health and well-being score of all markets surveyed: Physical (54.6), Social (58.7), Family (61.3), Finance (51.8) and work well-being (62.8).

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### **About Cigna Worldwide Life Insurance Company Limited and Cigna Worldwide General Insurance Company Limited (Cigna Hong Kong)**

Since 1933, Cigna Hong Kong has been offering insurance solutions at the right place and the right time, providing advice to customers throughout the different stages of their life journeys. Cigna delivers comprehensive health and wellness solutions to employers, employees and individual customers. Leveraging an extensive global healthcare network, Cigna provides group medical benefits that are suitable for international companies with a worldwide workforce, but also offers tailored and packaged group medical insurance plans to local small and medium-sized enterprises that fit specific needs of the company and its employees. For individual customers, Cigna offers a full suite of health insurance products that caters to consumers' diverse needs. For more details, please visit [www.cigna.com.hk](http://www.cigna.com.hk).

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- 1) Covered individuals must be diagnosed with COVID-19 in Hong Kong and admitted to a Hong Kong hospital for COVID-19 treatment in order to be eligible to receive the cash benefit. COVID-19 shall mean confirmed COVID-19 cases as defined by the World Health Organization ("WHO"). The diagnosis must always be supported and confirmed by a relevant medical test report. Clinical diagnosis alone does not meet this standard. From now till June 30, 2020, the first 100,000 Hong Kong identity cardholders aged between 18 and 65 who are residing in Hong Kong and have successfully registered for Free Cigna COVID-19 Income Protection online can receive a monthly benefit of HK\$10,000 if they are diagnosed with COVID-19 and admitted to hospital in Hong Kong for COVID-19 treatment.
  - 2) The above mentioned benefits are subject to terms and conditions. Please refer to the relevant product brochure and policy provision for more details.