

Press Release



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Cigna Study Shows Uncertainty about the Future Continues to be the Leading Cause of Stress

Hongkongers are the fifth most stressed population globally

Hong Kong – June 7, 2021 – Cigna Hong Kong today released the Hong Kong findings of the latest edition of its **Cigna COVID-19 Global Impact Study**. As part of Cigna’s annual 360 Well-Being Survey, this research is the fifth in a series of studies to better understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people’s well-being across 11 markets around the world, including Hong Kong. The research has been tracking people’s well-being through the different stages of the pandemic.

This fifth wave of research, Positivity around Vaccine Roll-Out and Anticipated Approval Leads Improved Perceptions on Whole Health, suggests that overall well-being in Hong Kong dropped slightly by 0.1 point between October and December 2020 (from 56.8 to 56.7) and was lower than the global average of 60.9. Hong Kong also has one of the lower levels of well-being of the 11 markets surveyed.

Financial insecurity still the key stressor

Finances continue to be a key stressor for the people of Hong Kong. While the financial well-being index remained stable (49.9 in October to 50.0 in December 2020), only 15% of respondents say their current financial situation is positive (this increased slightly from 13% in October 2020). People continue to feel insecure financially and increasingly pessimistic about their financial situation, with only 15% saying they can maintain their current standard of living (same number in October 2020). Only 12% of people said they have the financial ability to meet their own or their family’s medical needs (increased slightly from 11% in October 2020).

The majority of respondents continue to have a negative outlook on the economic environment and its impact on their financial situation and planning, with only 13% of respondents said they feel optimistic (slightly increased from 10% in October 2020). Only 11% of respondents said they have sufficient money for retirement (slightly increased from 10% in October 2020).

Hong Kong still has one of the higher stress levels across all the markets surveyed, with unmanageable stress level staying at 14% in December 2020. 88% of respondent say they are stressed, which is slightly lower than Taiwan (95%), Korea (95%), Thailand (92%), and China (91%), but continues to be higher than the global average of 86%. Uncertainty about the future is still the key stress driver, with more than half (53%) of respondents attributing this as the cause of their stress in December 2020 (slightly increased

from 52% in October 2020). Personal finance (37%) and fear of contracting COVID-19 (35%) are the other two biggest sources of stress.

Prolonged stress affects body and mind

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a wide range of mental health issues. People suffering from long-term stress have developed emotional and mental symptoms. This can be seen in married couples, where the most common stress induced symptoms are lack of interest in thinking about the future (16% in December 2020, same number in October 2020), short-tempered and unusually aggressive behavior (down from 22% in October to 15% in December 2020). Other symptoms include the inability to concentrate (down from 22% in October to 14% in December 2020), and becoming overly critical, with 14% of respondents claimed to have this symptom in December (down from 15% in October 2020).

Jonathan Spiers, CEO and Country Manager, Cigna Hong Kong, said: “The prolonged COVID-19 pandemic has created new stresses for Hong Kong people. They continue to worry about their personal finances and this creates a pessimistic outlook on the future. As COVID-19 vaccines are rolled out in Hong Kong, we hope this will have a positive impact on people’s health and well-being. As a health services company, it is important to provide support to both individuals and employers. Our individual and group medical insurance plans¹ cover the treatment of any side-effects caused by COVID-19 vaccinations, as well as COVID-19 treatment costs. To provide extra peace of mind to our customers during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are also extending the coverage period of our COVID-19 related special measures that was first introduced in 2020, until 31 December 2021.”

Lack of accessibility on virtual health still the cause of lower usage

The likelihood to use virtual health has slightly dropped (42% in December VS 48% in October 2020) if they are offered the option. For those who are likely to use virtual health, a majority (69% in December Vs 64% in October 2020) said a major factor is social distancing to minimize contact with others. Lack of accessibility to virtual health still appears to be a key reason for its lower usage in Hong Kong, with 59% of respondents said they do not have access to the service in December (slightly dropped from 61% in October 2020).

Work-related stress increased despite reasonable working hours and better work-life balance

Satisfaction regarding workload or working hours of the people in Hong Kong has increased, with more people saying they have a reasonable workload/ working hours (increased from 30% in October to 35% in December 2020), and have seen an improvement in work-life balance (increased from 39% in October to 42% in December 2020). However, 74% of respondents are still experiencing ‘Always on’ working (same number in October 2020), and workplace stress continues to mount, with 55% saying they have work-related stress in December (increased from 47% in October 2020).

Hong Kong working professionals are experiencing less work from home options (down from 56% in October to 53% in December 2020). Across all these working professionals, 47% think communication will be more effective when people meet face-to-face when they return to the workplace physically (down from 51% in October 2020). The research also reveals the majority of people prefer financial support from their employer on COVID-19 testing, even though there is a slight drop from 72% in October to 68% in

December 2020. Next is enhanced health insurance cover (slight drop from 69% in October to 67% in December 2020).

About Cigna 360 Well-Being Survey

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. The Cigna COVID-19 Global Impact Study is an ongoing study that has been conducted by Cigna between January and December 2020. To date, over 26,398 online interviews have been conducted across China, Hong Kong, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States. 2,363 respondents came from Hong Kong. Hong Kong has one of the lower health and well-being score of all markets surveyed: Physical (53.0), Social (57.7), Family (60.3), Finance (50.0) and work well-being (61.7).

¹ Standard policy terms and conditions apply. For the applicable benefit limits, please refer to the relevant benefit schedule and policy provision for more details. The COVID-19 vaccination must be approved by the relevant local health authorities and prescribed by a registered medical practitioner.

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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.