

Breast Cancer Screening Pilot Programme to be launched on September 6 (with photos)

The Government today (September 2) announced that starting from September 6, the Breast Cancer Screening Pilot Programme will be rolled out to provide screening services for eligible women over a period of two years, with an aim of detecting early breast cancer in women before any symptoms of breast cancer appear, so that treatment can be carried out early to prevent cancer from getting worse.

In the 2020 Policy Address, it was announced that the Government would, based on the revised recommendations of the Cancer Expert Working Group on Cancer Prevention and Screening (CEWG) of the Cancer Coordinating Committee, adopt a risk-based approach for breast cancer screening. The recommendations of the CEWG were revised taking into consideration available evidence as well as findings of the study on risk factors associated with breast cancer for local women conducted by the University of Hong Kong (HKU) and completed in 2019. According to the latest CEWG's recommendations, women aged between 44 and 69 with certain combinations of personalised risk factors putting them at increased risk of breast cancer are recommended to consider mammography (MMG) screening every two years. The breast cancer risk assessment tools developed by HKU are accessible at the Cancer Online Resource Hub: www.cancer.gov.hk/en/bctool.

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, said, "Breast cancer is the commonest cancer among females in Hong Kong and has been on the rise in the past decades. The Government is committed to stepping up the prevention and control of cancer. The Hong Kong Cancer Strategy launched in 2019 is the first holistic plan for cancer prevention and control for Hong Kong. The implementation of the Pilot Programme is to put into practice the directions laid down in the Hong Kong Cancer Strategy, which include providing evidence-based screening."

At the initial stage of the Pilot Programme, the Department of Health will use personalised breast cancer risk assessment tools to assess the risk of developing breast cancer for women enrolled in the Woman Health Service (WHS) and provide breast cancer screening, as appropriate, at its three Women Health Centres. Upon enrolling in the WHS with an annual fee of \$310, eligible women will pay \$225 for MMG per episode. Breast ultrasound scanning as a supplementary examination may be arranged for them if necessary.

Fees will be waived for persons who are receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, holders of waivers of medical charges under the Medical Fee Waiving Mechanism of Public Hospitals and Clinics, or Level 0 Voucher Holders of the Pilot Scheme on Residential Care Service Voucher for the Elderly.

For enquiries, please contact the clinics concerned during service hours. Details are available at: www.fhs.gov.hk/english/main_ser/woman_health/woman_health.html.

