

Closing date for new applications under CCF's Cervical Cancer Vaccination Pilot Scheme extended

The following is issued on behalf of the Community Care Fund Secretariat:

The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong (FPAHK) today (January 16) appealed to eligible teenage girls to register for the Community Care Fund (CCF) Cervical Cancer Vaccination Pilot Scheme (Pilot Scheme) as early as possible and receive the first dose of vaccine on or before September 30, 2019.

The Pilot Scheme was launched in October 2016 with funding from CCF for a duration of three years to provide cervical cancer vaccination for girls from eligible low-income families. The FPAHK is the implementing agent of the pilot scheme. New applications for the Pilot Scheme were originally to be closed in March 2019 to ensure that all applicants could receive a complete injection course of vaccines before the end of the Pilot Scheme in September 2019. The Commission on Poverty at its meeting held yesterday (January 15) approved to extend the closing date for new applications under the Pilot Scheme by six months to September 2019. Eligible applicants should register for the Pilot Scheme to receive the first dose of vaccine on or before September 30, 2019, and complete the vaccination by receiving the second and/or third dose within the following six months.

Eligible beneficiaries of the Pilot Scheme include girls aged 9 to 18 who are receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, female students aged 9 or above who are receiving full grant under the School Textbook Assistance Scheme (STAS), girls aged 9 to 18 who are from households benefiting from the Working Family Allowance Scheme and female students aged 9 or above who are receiving a half grant under the STAS. Except for female students receiving a half grant under the STAS (who will be required to pay \$100 for each dose of vaccine), all eligible beneficiaries will receive free cervical cancer vaccination. As at the end of December 2018, around 20 000 girls had benefited under the Pilot Scheme.

Cervical cancer is a common female cancer caused by certain types of human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV infection can be prevented by vaccination. When girls get vaccinated at a younger age, their body produces a higher level of antibodies. The protection is also greater when the vaccine is received before the start of sexual activity. The FPAHK urges all eligible girls to register for vaccination as early as possible. It will provide eligible applicants with vaccination and related services at the three Youth Health Care Centres in Wan Chai, Mong Kok and Kwai Fong. Eligible applicants may call these centres to book their first appointment. At the first appointment, applicants must bring along documentary proof in person for processing the application, and arrangements will be made for them to undergo

clinical assessment prior to vaccination. Applicants under 18 years old must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian at their first appointment.

The publicity leaflet of the Pilot Scheme is available at the Youth Health Care Centres, Women's Clubs and clinics of the FPAHK, Social Security Field Units of the Social Welfare Department, clinics and health centres under the Department of Health, and the Working Family Allowance Office of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency.

Eligibility criteria, application procedures and other details of the Pilot Scheme are available at the CCF website (www.communitycarefund.hk) and the FPAHK website (www.famplan.org.hk/ccfvaccine). For enquiries, please call the Pilot Scheme hotline at 2919 7878 or email ccfvaccine@famplan.org.hk.