

DH reminds public on proper use of Elderly Health Care Voucher

With regard to the recent operation by the Police against illegal use of the Elderly Health Care Voucher (EHCV), the Department of Health (DH) today (January 25) reminded members of the public on the proper use of the EHCV, and reiterated that the DH conducts regular and sampling checks in accordance with the monitoring mechanism, and all suspected cases of violating the EHCV Scheme rules or making false declarations will be strictly dealt with. Appropriate follow-up action and measures will be taken, including referring relevant cases to law enforcement agencies for investigation.

A spokesman for the DH pointed out that, to ensure proper reimbursement of voucher claims to participating service providers and proper use of public money, the DH has put in place measures and procedures for checking and auditing voucher claims. These include conducting routine inspections of service providers, monitoring and surveillance to detect aberrant patterns of transactions, as well as conducting investigations into complaints received.

The spokesman stressed that even after registering for shared use of vouchers between spouses, the voucher account balance of the deceased will not be transferred to the voucher account of the surviving spouse. A person using the deceased's voucher account balance with Hong Kong identity cards or Certificates of Exemption, which are issued by the Immigration Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, of the deceased may also be charged for offences such as fraud and be subject to criminal liability. Moreover, vouchers cannot be used solely for purchasing goods, medication, medical equipment and products, or redeemed for cash. Members of the public should abide by the relevant regulations and not defy the law. Making a false declaration is a criminal offence and offenders are liable to a fine or imprisonment upon conviction. The DH has again reminded enrolled health care providers (EHCPs) about the relevant regulations through the eHealth System (Subsidies).

Under the EHCV Scheme, voucher recipients shall produce their valid Hong Kong identity cards or Certificates of Exemption, to receive the healthcare services in person provided by the EHCPs in order to use the EHCV.

EHCPs should comply with the terms and conditions of the EHCV Scheme Agreement, and verify the voucher recipient's identity when providing healthcare services. If any service provider is suspected of fraud, the DH will refer the case to the Police and/or relevant law enforcement agencies for follow-up. The DH may also disqualify the service provider concerned from participating in the EHCV Scheme. If any service provider is suspected of professional misconduct, the DH will refer the case to the relevant professional regulatory board/council for follow-up. In addition, if any participating service provider is found to have violated the terms and conditions of the EHCV Scheme Agreement, the relevant voucher claims will not be reimbursed by the Government. In case the reimbursement has been made, the

Government will recover the amount from the service provider concerned. The DH will also issue an advisory/warning letter to the service provider concerned as appropriate.

Members of the public may refer to the EHVS website (www.hcv.gov.hk) for more information, or call the EHVS hotline (2838 2311) for enquiries.