

Director of Health observes School Outreach Vaccination Pilot Programme vaccination activity (with photos)

The Director of Health, Dr Constance Chan, and the Controller of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH), Dr Wong Ka-hing, visited Pentecostal Yu Leung Fat Primary School in Fanling this morning (November 16) to observe the operation of the School Outreach Vaccination Pilot Programme and visit Government Outreach Team colleagues providing the vaccination service to schoolchildren on-site.

To enhance the seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) uptake rate among primary schoolchildren, the DH introduced the School Outreach Vaccination Pilot Programme this year, which has been underway since October 22, to reach out to 184 primary schools gradually to help the schoolchildren in preparation for the winter influenza season through Government Outreach Teams and Public-Private-Partnership Teams.

"Today's vaccination activity was performed by a Government Outreach Team. About 740 pupils, over 80 per cent of the total number of pupils, consented to receive SIV at the school. In addition to providing vaccination service to pupils, our DH colleagues also arranged the procurement and delivery of vaccines as well as collected unused vaccines and clinical waste. We are pleased to see that the outreach vaccination arrangement has been smooth and the school and parents have been very supportive of the activity. Home-school co-operation is of vital importance to raising vaccination coverage," Dr Chan said.

Dr Chan added that based on previous epidemiological and clinical experiences, vaccinating schoolchildren can reduce influenza-related complications, hospitalisations and deaths; potentially reduce absenteeism; and provide numerous benefits to them with respect to personal health and learning. As the winter influenza season is approaching and it takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop in the body after vaccination to offer protection, she reminded parents to consider vaccination for their children as soon as possible.

In addition to introducing the School Outreach Vaccination Pilot Programme, the DH has also rolled out the Enhanced Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (VSS) Outreach Vaccination this year. Under the enhanced programme, schools can invite participating doctors from a [list published on the CHP's website](#) to arrange outreach SIV service at their campus. No tendering will be required by the schools and no extra service fees will be charged by the doctors to schools or students. The Government will also provide subsidies for vaccines and clinical waste disposal to participating doctors.

"Primary schools, kindergartens (KGs) and child care centres (CCCs) not

participating in the pilot programme are urged to arrange outreach vaccination as early as possible for their students through the enhanced programme, which has been underway since October 10. As of November 9, 109 doctors had signed up for the enhanced programme. We note that 91 primary schools and 87 KGs/CCCs will arrange outreach vaccination activities under the enhanced programme," she said.

Dr Chan pointed out that with the various outreach vaccination models offered, the DH hopes to encourage schools and doctors to conduct vaccination activities in schools more actively, so as to boost the vaccination coverage among schoolchildren. The DH will review the arrangements of outreach vaccination activities and make use of the experiences gained to explore and evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of different programmes with an aim of enhancing services in the future and further extending the vaccination coverage among schoolchildren.

Dr Wong said that based on past epidemiological patterns, the winter influenza season usually occurs from January to March or April each year. Besides high-risk groups such as the elderly, children and immunocompromised patients, healthy people may also contract influenza and develop complications. Schoolchildren aside, other eligible persons can also receive subsidised or free SIV vaccination via the VSS or the Government Vaccination Programme (GVP) respectively.

Dr Wong reminded the public that SIV is one of the safe and effective ways of preventing seasonal influenza and its complications. He appealed to members of the public, particularly those in high-risk groups, to get vaccinated early to ensure personal protection before the influenza season arrives.

As of November 11, 2018, 75 schools have conducted vaccination activities via the School Outreach Vaccination Pilot Programme with around 34 400 doses of SIV administered, while 57 primary schools and 67 KGs/CCCs have conducted vaccination activities via the Enhanced VSS Outreach Vaccination with around 36 200 doses of SIV administered. Meanwhile, over 163 000 doses of SIV had been administered via the GVP and over 261 000 doses had been administered via the VSS (including Enhanced VSS Outreach Vaccination), representing increases of 12 per cent and 63 per cent respectively from the same period in the 2017/18 season.

For more details of the vaccination programmes, the public may call the CHP's hotline (2125 2125) in office hours or visit the CHP's [Vaccination Schemes page](#).

