

Doctors participating in primary healthcare programmes must be enlisted in Primary Care Directory from October 6

The Health Bureau (HHB) announced today (September 21) that with effect from October 6, only doctors enlisted in the Primary Care Directory (the Directory) will be allowed to take part in various government-subsidised primary healthcare programmes, including the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme (EHVS), the Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme (CRCSP) and the General Outpatient Clinic Public-Private Partnership Programme (GOPC PPP) as a move to tie in with the development of primary healthcare services. Those who are yet to be enlisted in the Directory by the end of the two-month grace period (i.e. December 6 and thereafter) will no longer be able to offer their patients subsidised services under the aforementioned programmes. Members of the public who are benefiting from the aforementioned subsidised programmes should enquire with their doctors or check online to confirm if their doctors are enlisted in the Directory, thereby ensuring that they can continue to receive relevant subsidised services via the same doctor in the future.

At present, it is a requirement for doctors participating in government-subsidised Vaccination Subsidy Scheme, the Residential Care Home Vaccination Programme, District Health Centre services as well as the Chronic Disease Co-Care Pilot Scheme about to be launched in the fourth quarter this year to be enlisted in the Directory. The Primary Healthcare Blueprint recommends the compulsory enlisting of all healthcare professionals who provide primary healthcare services in the Directory. Further to the recommendation, the Government will extend the relevant requirement to cover all government-subsidised primary healthcare programmes, i.e. including the EHVS, the CRCSP and the GOPC PPP. Such standardisation of arrangements across various subsidised programmes can ensure that doctors participating in the programmes are receiving continuing medical education relevant to their disciplines, thus enhancing the quality assurance of primary healthcare services. In the long run, the Government will gradually extend the application of this requirement to other primary healthcare professionals.

To minimise the impact on services users of the subsidised services concerned, the HHB has been alerting doctors participating in the EHVS, the CRCSP and the GOPC PPP of the new arrangement with details through different channels since March this year, and at the same time assisting them to enrol in the Directory. The HHB will also set a two-month grace period to facilitate the adaptation of doctors and their patients to the new arrangement. The Government calls on doctors to complete the enrolment process as early as possible should they intend to continue engaging in these three subsidised programmes. Doctors who are not enlisted in the Directory after the grace period (i.e. December 6 and thereafter) will no longer be

allowed to participate in these subsidised programmes and their patients will as a result be unable to receive the relevant subsidised services.

For citizens who wish to check whether their doctors are enlisted in the Directory, they may browse the Directory online at apps.pcdirectory.gov.hk/public/EN, apart from approaching their doctors directly.

The Directory is a web-based database of practice information and professional qualifications of primary healthcare service providers in the community. It enables members of the public to look for information of service providers such as their practice addresses, telephone numbers, consultation hours, service provisions as well as their participation in various government-subsidised programmes. Citizens can make reference to this information before choosing a doctor, dentist or Chinese medicine practitioner that suits their personal needs.

As at the end of August, a total of 3 337 doctors were enlisted in the Directory. The Government urges all general practitioners and specialists who provide primary healthcare services to join the Directory and offer citizens co-ordinated and person-centred primary healthcare services in a comprehensive and continuous manner.