

First batch of licences under Private Healthcare Facilities Ordinance to take effect January 1, 2021

The Department of Health (DH) today (December 31) said that the first batch of licences under the Private Healthcare Facilities Ordinance (Cap. 633) will take effect tomorrow (January 1). The licences include those for all private hospitals and the first batch of licences for day procedure centres (DPCs).

A spokesman for the DH said, "Following the licences coming into effect, it signifies that the new regulatory regime under the Ordinance is being implemented in phases."

The Ordinance was gazetted on November 30, 2018, aiming to further protect patient safety and rights through the introduction of a new regulatory regime for private healthcare facilities (PHFs). Under the Ordinance, operators of premises where registered medical practitioners and/or dentists practice, including hospitals, DPCs and clinics, are required to obtain a licence or a letter of exemption. Licensees of PHFs are required to comply with the relevant code of practice. A complaint handling mechanism will be established under the new regime, and members of the public can make their complaints against licensed PHFs via this channel.

From tomorrow onwards, the Ordinance will replace the Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Maternity Homes Registration Ordinance (Cap. 165), providing a new regulatory regime for private hospitals. The first batch of licences of DPCs under the Ordinance will also take effect on the same day.

The spokesman reminded that operators who have yet to apply for DPC licences should submit licence applications via the e-licensing system as soon as possible. For more information on application for the DPC licence, please refer to the website of the Office for Regulation of Private Healthcare Facilities of the DH (www.orphf.gov.hk/en). Details of application for clinic licences and requests for letters of exemption for small practice clinics will be announced in due course.

The spokesman added that the DH has established and maintains a PHFs register, which will be available on the website www.directory.orphf.gov.hk/Directory/en/Home/Home for public inspection tomorrow.