[Government announces medical exemption arrangement under "vaccine pass"](#)

     The Government announced today (January 27) the arrangement for obtaining the COVID-19 Vaccination Medical Exemption Certificate by members of the public under the arrangement of the "vaccine pass".

     Under the current arrangement of the "vaccine bubble", staff members of certain premises are required to receive COVID-19 vaccination, or undergo regular tests if they have been assessed by a doctor as being medically unsuitable for vaccination. The Chief Executive announced today that in view of the expansion of the "vaccine bubble" to cover the majority of premises used by the public, the measure will be renamed as the "vaccine pass" to indicate that only those vaccinated may access the premises. The "vaccine pass" under planning requires those entering certain premises to have received COVID-19 vaccination. Only under the following two circumstances can one be exempted from the vaccination requirement: (1) an individual is ineligible for vaccination due to age; or (2) an individual is unsuitable for vaccination due to health reasons with relevant proof from a doctor.

Exemption Certificate

     Under the arrangement of the "vaccine pass", a person who is medically unsuitable for vaccination is required to obtain an Exemption Certificate issued by a doctor. With a view to standardising and aligning arrangements, the Department of Health (DH) has produced a template of the Exemption Certificate for use by doctors. Members of the public who are medically unsuitable for vaccination may consult a doctor on whether they are unsuitable and thus obtain from the doctor an Exemption Certificate (may involve a fee for private doctors). The validity period of the Exemption Certificate is pre-set at 90 days, with the longest being 180 days. The actual validity period will be decided by the doctor having regard to clinical conditions.

     "For the convenience of the public, doctors under the Hospital Authority (HA) and private doctors will issue electronic versions of the Exemption Certificate to members of the public through the HA's Clinical Management System and the Government's eHealth System respectively," a Government spokesman said.

     The Exemption Certificate issued via the aforementioned computer systems will carry an encrypted QR code. The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer has added to the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application new functions for saving and displaying the Exemption Certificate. The "eHealth" application and the COVID-19 Electronic Vaccination and Testing Record System (login with iAM Smart) will also be updated correspondingly to enable the public to download their Exemption Certificates issued by doctors. This arrangement will save users who record and display their Exemption

Certificate via mobile application from having to carry paper copies.

A transitional period of about three months (until April 30) will be provided for the Exemption Certificate arrangement, so that private doctors can have sufficient time to register for the eHealth System and make preparations to issue electronic Exemption Certificates to members of the public. During the transitional period, private doctors can still issue non-electronic copies of the Exemption Certificate following the template compiled by the DH, and the relevant paper copy of the Exemption Certificate can continue to be used during the transitional period. However, after the transitional period, all Exemption Certificates must be issued electronically by doctors via the eHealth System or the HA's computer system. Certificates without an encrypted QR code will not be accepted.

The spokesman also pointed out that according to overseas and local experience, most people are suitable to receive the two COVID-19 vaccines currently available in Hong Kong, i.e. the CoronaVac and Comirnaty vaccines. The DH has issued to private doctors guidelines listing out the medical reasons for being not suitable for vaccination. Doctors will issue the Exemption Certificate only after verifying that the persons concerned are not suitable to receive the two vaccines mentioned above.

"Persons who are issued with the Exemption Certificate should be extra cautious in maintaining good personal and environmental hygiene at all times as they do not have vaccine protection for the time being. Measures include wearing a mask properly, maintaining hand hygiene at all times, going out less and reducing social activities, and maintaining appropriate social distance with other people as far as practicable. They should also consult a doctor regularly to assess their suitability to get vaccinated. To guard against the threat posed by the mutant virus strains with high transmissibility, persons who have yet to receive vaccination should get vaccinated as early as possible for self-protection. Eligible persons should also receive a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible to enhance protection and build a protective barrier in the community," the spokesman reminded.

"QR Code Verification Scanner"

Pursuant to the current specifications and directions under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), when allowing customers to enter their premises, operators of relevant premises must use the "QR Code Verification Scanner" mobile application provided by the Government to scan customers' QR codes of their COVID-19 vaccination records for fulfilling the requirement of performing due diligence checks of customers' compliance with the relevant requirement about vaccination.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has updated the "QR Code Verification Scanner" mobile application to enable users to identify both COVID-19 vaccination record and Exemption Certificate QR code. Operators of relevant premises should update to the latest mobile application version

(version 4.0.1 for Android mobile devices and version 4.0.1 for iOS mobile devices). The FEHD will also update the related information on its thematic webpage (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/events/covid19/vaccination_record_app.html).

Operators of relevant premises should update the "QR Code Verification Scanner" mobile application as soon as possible to allow staff members to familiarise themselves with and get used to identifying COVID-19 vaccination records as well as the Exemption Certificate QR code. Customers can make use of the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application, and the "eHealth" application or the COVID-19 Electronic Vaccination and Testing Record System (login with iAM Smart) to be updated soon, to display the COVID-19 vaccination record and the Exemption Certificate QR code. For confirmation's sake, persons without smartphones can carry a paper copy of their COVID-19 vaccination record or Exemption Certificate printed with an encrypted QR code for scanning by the staff members of certain premises.