

Government provides clinical assessment for members of public who hold Medical Exemption Certificates with suspected problems

The Government announced on October 5 further facilitation measures to assist individuals who hold a COVID-19 Vaccination Medical Exemption Certificate suspected to be issued not in compliance with guidelines by a doctor suspected to have violated the law, for obtaining appropriate clinical assessment on whether they are suitable for receiving vaccination depending on their needs.

The Government [announced on September 29](#) that with regard to private doctors who are suspected to have failed to provide proper medical consultation to patients in accordance with the guidelines of the Department of Health (DH) and abused the issuance of Exemption Certificates, if members of the public hold Exemption Certificates issued by those relevant doctors allegedly without appropriate clinical assessment, they may consult other doctors depending on their needs to determine whether they are suitable for receiving COVID-19 vaccination or can continue to be medically exempted. Apart from arranging consultations with other private doctors by themselves, the Government also encourages them to visit general out-patient clinics (GOPCs) under the Hospital Authority (HA) (except designated clinics for confirmed cases of COVID-19 and clinics which have temporarily suspended services) where public sector doctors can ascertain whether the patients concerned can continue to obtain medical exemption according to their clinical condition.

In order to further offer convenience to relevant members of the public who hold Exemption Certificates with suspected problems to consult public sector doctors, for individuals holding Exemption Certificates issued by the seven doctors suspected to have abused the issuance of Exemption Certificates, they may make appointments for GOPC services through the [telephone appointment system](#) or the "Book GOPC" function in the HA's one-stop mobile application "HA Go". In addition, they may also visit the aforementioned GOPCs under the HA. The clinics will help them arrange consultations on the same day or make appointments for consultation, such that they can consult doctors on whether they can continue to be medically exempted depending on their needs. Relevant individuals are also exempted from the fees of GOPC services (\$50). The Government stressed that, since the relevant doctors are suspected to have failed to provide proper medical consultation to patients in accordance with the guidelines of the DH without appropriate clinical assessment before issuing the Exemption Certificates, if relevant individuals continue to delay vaccination according to the recommendations by the relevant Exemption Certificates, not only may their health be put at risk of severe illness or

even deaths in case of COVID-19 infection, but they will also place an unnecessary burden on the public healthcare system. Relevant individuals should consult doctors again depending on their needs to determine whether they are suitable for receiving COVID-19 vaccination or can continue to be medically exempted.

â€‹A Government spokesman reiterated that, if members of the public use an improper Exemption Certificate to enter premises subject to the Vaccine Pass, information in the QR code will be recorded by the scanner at premises subject to active checking, and Government enforcement officers are also entitled to require citizens to present their Vaccine Pass, including the Exemption Certificates QR Code. If a member of the public is found to have used an invalid or fraudulent Exemption Certificate upon verification, the relevant information will be passed to enforcement departments for follow-up. Using a false instrument knowingly may contravene the Crimes Ordinance. The maximum penalty upon conviction is imprisonment for 14 years. Members of the public are urged not to defy the law and not to use Exemption Certificates obtained through improper means.