

Government responds to matters regarding effectiveness and administration of COVID-19 vaccines

A spokesman for the Government said today (January 14) that the Government noticed the various views voiced by different people on the effectiveness and administration of COVID-19 vaccines. The Government stressed that COVID-19 vaccines used in Hong Kong must satisfy the relevant requirements and procedures, and obtain emergency use approval in accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Use of Vaccines) Regulation (Cap. 599K) (the Regulation), with a view to ensuring the safety, efficacy and quality of the vaccines.

According to the Regulation, the Secretary for Food and Health may, under the state of public health emergency, authorise the use of COVID-19 vaccines which fulfil the criteria of safety, efficacy and quality for the purpose of vaccination programmes conducted by the Government. The Regulation also specifies the conditions and procedures which the vaccine manufacturer or its representative, importer, or wholesale dealer must follow when submitting application for seeking authorisation for emergency use. In particular, the applicant must submit Phase 3 clinical data of the vaccine concerned, overseas authorisation obtained, and other information relevant to the safety, efficacy and quality of the vaccine. The Advisory Panel appointed by the Chief Executive under the Regulation will examine the information of relevant vaccine and provide a clear recommendation to the Government. The Secretary for Food and Health will consider the advice of the Advisory Panel before authorising a vaccine for emergency use.

"The Government will strive for the early supply of vaccines to Hong Kong. We will also ensure that the vaccines concerned satisfy the requirements of safety, efficacy and quality, and obtain emergency use approval in accordance with the relevant requirements and procedures of the Regulation, before providing vaccination for members of the public. The Department of Health is actively following up with vaccine manufacturers which have reached procurement agreements with the Government, with a view to obtaining the relevant data for assessment and approval as soon as possible. To enhance the public's confidence in vaccines, the Government's work in vaccine administration will be based on scientific evidence and adhere to the principles of openness and transparency. We will provide members of the public with the latest information on relevant vaccines through different channels in a timely manner, and reveal experts' views on the vaccines, so that the public can obtain correct and comprehensive information. Before formal data and experts' views on individual vaccine are available, the Government urges the public to carefully ascertain online information on the vaccines and not to believe in unverified rumours," the Government spokesman reiterated.