

Government welcomes passage of Private Healthcare Facilities Bill

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, welcomed the passage of the Private Healthcare Facilities Bill by the Legislative Council today (November 15).

Professor Chan said: "The new Ordinance will further protect patient safety and consumer rights through the introduction of a new regulatory regime for private healthcare facilities (PHFs). It will also facilitate the sustainable development of the healthcare system.

"Four types of PHFs will be subject to regulation, namely hospitals, day procedure centres, clinics and health services establishments. We will commence the regulatory regime in phases based on the types of PHFs and their risk levels. Sufficient time would be allowed for existing operators to get prepared for the new regulatory regime."

The registration for private hospitals under the new Ordinance would commence in 2019. The registration for day procedure centres and clinics are tentatively scheduled for 2020 and 2021 respectively.

The Private Healthcare Facilities Ordinance will be gazetted on November 30, 2018. As part of the transitional arrangement, an operator of a day procedure centre or a clinic in operation on November 30, 2018 will be issued with a provisional licence upon application for a full licence, provided that certain conditions are met. The provisional licence allows the day procedure centre or clinic concerned to continue to operate before it is qualified for the full licence.

"To safeguard public health, all operators who commence a private healthcare facility after November 30, 2018 should comply with the new regulatory regime, and apply for a full licence in accordance with the arrangement set by the Department of Health. The Department of Health will organise briefings for stakeholders on the details of the regulatory regime in the coming months," she said.

The Government will allocate additional resources and manpower to the Department of Health for setting up a full-fledged Office for Regulation of Private Healthcare Facilities. The Office will undertake the relevant statutory registration and enforcement work.

Members of the public may visit the website of the Department of Health's Office for Regulation of Private Healthcare Facilities (www.dh.gov.hk/english/main/main_orphf/main_orphf.html) to obtain the latest information.