

LCQ17: Encouraging and facilitating members of public to receive vaccination

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Han-pan and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (July 21):

Question:

Quite a number of members of the public have relayed that while they are very willing to receive vaccination against the coronavirus disease 2019 (vaccination), they have not taken any action because they do not know whether it is suitable, given their health conditions, for them to do so. Besides, as some members of the public residing in remote areas have difficulty in travelling to and from the Community Vaccination Centres, they have not received the vaccination. On encouraging and facilitating members of the public to receive vaccination, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it knows, since the 25th of last month when the general outpatient clinics under the Hospital Authority started providing vaccination assessment service to patients who are regularly followed up at such clinics, (i) among the total attendances at such clinics, the number and percentage of those who have been assessed, and (ii) among the people assessed, the number and percentage of those assessed to be unsuitable for receiving vaccination; the criteria adopted for assessing whether patients are suitable for receiving vaccination;

(2) whether it will consider setting up mobile vaccination stations to vaccinate residents in remote areas (eg outlying islands); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will further discuss with the authorities of the Mainland and Macao shortening the quarantine periods for those Hong Kong residents who have received vaccination or granting them exemption from quarantine when they enter the Mainland and Macao, so as to encourage more members of the public to receive vaccination; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government launched the "Early Vaccination for All" campaign with an aim to building an immune barrier in Hong Kong as soon as possible by raising the vaccination rate during the critical period from now until the end of August, thereby restoring normality to society sooner rather than later.

In consultation with the Civil Service Bureau and the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, my reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Chan Han-pan is as follows:

(1) In support of the Government's COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, since June 25, the Hospital Authority (HA) has offered additional assessment sessions to patients with regular follow-up appointments at the 73 General Out-patient Clinics (GOPCs) who intend to receive COVID-19 vaccination but are in doubt of their suitability. The extra assessment sessions will be provided ahead of the patients' follow-up appointments for doctors to assess their clinical conditions and medical records and make appropriate recommendations to aid them in making decision on vaccination. If a patient is assessed by the doctor to be temporarily unfit for vaccination due to medical reasons, the doctor will advise the patient to postpone the vaccination and a clinical assessment will be performed again at a later time. A medical certificate will also be issued to the patient. As at July 13, the HA's GOPCs have made appointments for over 2 700 eligible patients to receive the COVID-19 vaccination assessment service, out of which around 2 120 appointments have completed assessment. The HA does not maintain record on the number of people who are assessed to be unfit for receiving vaccination. The HA will closely monitor the demand for the relevant assessment service and review the arrangement concerned, with a view to providing consultation by doctors to the patients to facilitate them to receive vaccination as soon as their physical conditions permit, having regard to manpower and infection control measures.

According to the recommendation made by the Joint Scientific Committee (Note) and the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel, anyone who has received influenza vaccines before can safely receive COVID-19 vaccines. Unless individuals have concerns regarding their physical conditions and need to first consult a doctor, otherwise it is not necessary for most people (including elders) to undergo assessment before receiving COVID-19 vaccination.

(2) In addition to receiving COVID-19 vaccination at Community Vaccination Centres or designated clinics, members of the public can also participate in vaccination outreach services organised by community groups, organisations, enterprises, schools, etc, in order to receive vaccination in a more convenient manner. If the relevant organisations have a sufficient number of people who would like to receive vaccination and can provide suitable venue and sufficient space, they can contact the outreach vaccination service hotline (3904 1490) for arrangement of outreach services. Furthermore, the relevant organisations or groups can also directly contact doctors who provide COVID-19 vaccination services at non-clinic setting to arrange for vaccination outreach activities. Contact information can be found at the relevant website (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/list_vssdr_covid_non_clinic_eng.pdf).

(3) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) Government has been communicating and liaising closely with the governments of the Mainland and

the Macao SAR on measures for epidemic prevention and control. For the early resumption of normal cross-boundary flow of people amongst the three places in an orderly manner, the Hong Kong SAR Government will continue to closely monitor and control the epidemic situation, and to speed up vaccination for members of the public. Meanwhile, the Hong Kong SAR Government will maintain liaison with the Mainland and Macao to actively explore the resumption of normal cross-boundary activities amongst the three places in a gradual and orderly manner, on the premise that the epidemic situation in the three places is under control and without posing additional public health risks.

Note: Namely the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases.