

Commission on Poverty convenes 30th meeting in its second term

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the 30th meeting of the Commission on Poverty (CoP) in its second term this afternoon (June 21). It was also the last meeting of the current term of CoP.

CoP discussed two initiatives on enhancing retirement protection at the meeting, namely the Life Annuity Scheme (LAS) and the abolition of the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) "offsetting" arrangement. After considering the opinions received during the public engagement exercise on retirement protection completed by CoP in mid-2016, the Government formulated a series of measures to strengthen the retirement protection system. The two initiatives discussed by CoP were introduced with a view to supporting elderly persons in investment management and enhancing the MPF pillar.

At the meeting, the HKMC Annuity Limited (HKMCA) briefed members on the publicity education and implementation arrangements of LAS. Members noted that HKMCA would announce the subscription details in July this year. HKMCA has launched publicity and public education programmes on LAS since March this year and the market response has been largely positive. Members expressed views on various aspects of LAS, including the subscription procedure, expected investment return, subscription amount, publicity channels, etc. Members hoped that HKMCA could consider enhancing the arrangements of LAS subject to the response after its implementation.

Members were also briefed by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on the preliminary thinking of abolition of MPF "offsetting" arrangement. Since the announcement of the preliminary thinking, various sectors of the community have expressed diverse views on the abolition of MPF "offsetting" arrangement. They are particularly concerned about the impact of the arrangement on micro, small and medium enterprises. The Government would listen carefully to the suggestions of various sectors and consider options to enhance the abolition of MPF "offsetting" arrangement, including considering increasing the Government's financial commitment, and lobbying for public support, with a view to gauging support from various sectors in the community in order to finalise the relevant arrangement as soon as possible. Members shared their views on the preliminary thinking and agreed that the abolition of MPF "offsetting" arrangement should be implemented expeditiously to complement other relevant measures in reinforcing the multi-pillar retirement protection system in Hong Kong.

In addition, CoP endorsed the launch of a new assistance programme and the extension of five existing assistance programmes of the Community Care Fund (CCF). CoP also approved the introduction of new drugs or medical devices and revision of provision for three Medical Assistance Programmes.

Details are as follows:

New assistance programme

(1) CoP agreed to launch the Subsidy to Purchase and Construct Modular Housing as a pilot scheme to facilitate the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) to implement their Modular Social Housing Scheme – Nam Cheong Street. Under the pilot scheme, the HKCSS will purchase and build modular housing in order to provide transitional community housing. The two-year pilot scheme with an overall provision of \$35.74 million is expected to benefit about 90 households.

Extension of existing assistance programmes

(2) CoP endorsed the implementation of the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low Income Families Phase III and the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Low-income Carers of Persons with Disabilities Phase II to provide carers of elderly persons/persons with disabilities from low income families with a living allowance to help supplement their living expenses. The two pilot schemes will last for two years from October 2018 to September 2020. The new phases of the pilot schemes will be largely run under the existing operation mode with three enhancements: (a) increasing the beneficiary quota for carers of elderly persons and carers of persons with disabilities by 2 000 and 500 respectively; (b) increasing the monthly allowance disbursed to each eligible carer of elderly persons/persons with disabilities from \$2,000 to \$2,400, and the monthly allowance disbursed to carers who take care of more than one elderly persons/persons with disabilities at the same time from \$4,000 to \$4,800; (c) increasing the monthly service fees of approved service providers from \$500 to \$600 for serving each carer of elderly persons/persons with disabilities for the first six months, and from \$300 to \$360 starting from the seventh month onwards. The revised total provisions for the Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Carers of Elderly Persons from Low Income Families and Pilot Scheme on Living Allowance for Low-income Carers of Persons with Disabilities will be revised to \$538.24 million and \$224.22 million respectively.

(3) CoP endorsed the extension of the programme of Enhancing the Academic Expenses Grant for Students with Special Educational Needs and Financial Needs Pursuing Post-secondary Programmes. The programme aims to provide a special educational needs academic expenses grant for eligible students with financial and special educational needs for three school years until 2020/21. No additional funding is required for the extended programme which is expected to benefit about 750 students.

(4) CoP endorsed the implementation of Phase III of Subsidy for Owners' Corporations (OCs) of Old Buildings programme for three years from October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2021. Under the programme, each eligible OC will be granted subsidy on an accountable basis in respect of the designated items with a view to improving the overall building management. The Phase III programme will adopt the existing subsidy system with two enhancements,

namely (a) raising the average rateable value limits of the residential units of buildings of eligible OCs from \$120,000 to \$162,000 for urban area buildings (including Sha Tin, Kwai Tsing and Tsuen Wan); and from \$92,000 to \$124,400 for New Territories buildings; and (b) raising the maximum total amount of subsidy for each OC from \$20,000 to \$24,000. The Phase III programme requires no additional funding and is expected to benefit approximately an additional 2 500 OCs.

(5) CoP endorsed the continuation of Elderly Dental Assistance Programme to provide free removable dentures and other related dental services to eligible low-income elderly persons until February 28, 2019. The extension of the programme requires no additional funding and would benefit about 1 400 cases per month on average. CoP also agreed to reserve \$20,000 for the next audit of the programme;

Introduction of new drugs or medical devices to Medical Assistance Programmes

(6) CoP approved the addition of two specific self-financed cancer drugs (Nivolumab and Obinutuzumab) to the First Phase Programme of the Medical Assistance Programme from August 2018 onwards. This will increase the number of self-financed cancer drugs to 18 under the First Phase Programme for treating 14 cancer diseases. CoP also noted that the Hospital Authority (HA) had revised the designated clinical indication of Pertuzumab and relaxed the designated clinical indication of Bevacizumab under the programme. The above introduction of new drugs and revision or relaxation of clinical indications require no additional funding. It is estimated that the addition of the two drugs will benefit about 25 patients in the first 12 months upon implementation.

(7) CoP endorsed the inclusion of Nusinersen, a drug for treating Spinal Muscular Atrophy, under the programme of Subsidy for Eligible Patients to Purchase Ultra-expensive Drugs (Including Those for Treating Uncommon Disorders). The programme requires no additional funding. Needy patients with clinical needs can apply for drug subsidy through this programme. HA expects that about 24 patients can benefit from the programme in the first 12 months upon implementation; and

(8) CoP endorsed the addition of Subcutaneous Implantable Defibrillator and Percutaneous Pulmonary Valve Implantation under the programme of Subsidy for Eligible Patients of Hospital Authority to Purchase Specified Implantable Medical Devices for Interventional Procedures from August 2018 onwards. The two medical devices are beneficial to patients with Ventricular Arrhythmias and Right Ventricular Outflow Tract Regurgitant and/or Stenosis respectively. With an approved revised provision of \$27.015 million for the period from August 1, 2017 to March 31, 2019, the two additional medical devices is expected to benefit about 15 patients in the first 12 months upon implementation.

At the meeting, CoP also noted the implementation progress of various assistance programmes and the financial position of CCF, as well as the report of the four public consultation sessions held by CCF from March to May

this year.

The current term of CoP will expire on 30 June this year. Mr Cheung expressed sincerest gratitude to all members for their active participation in poverty alleviation work and invaluable advice to the Government during their tenure. The Government is drawing up the membership of the next term of CoP which will be announced later this month.

CHP investigates hand, foot and mouth disease outbreak at residential child care centre in Wan Chai District

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (June 21) investigating an outbreak of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) at a residential child care centre in Wan Chai District, and again urged the public, schools and institutions to maintain strict hand, personal and environmental hygiene.

The outbreak affected 29 young children, 15 boys and 14 girls aged 1 to 3, who have developed fever, oral ulcers, rash and vesicles over hands or feet since June 1. All of them sought medical attention and none required hospitalisation. All patients are in a stable condition.

The stool specimen of one affected child tested positive for enterovirus upon laboratory testing.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit to the centre and advised the management on necessary infection control and preventive measures. The centre has been placed under medical surveillance. Investigations are ongoing.

"HFMD is common in children while adult cases may also occur. It is usually caused by enteroviruses (EVs) such as Coxsackie virus and EV71. It is clinically characterised by maculopapular rashes or vesicular lesions occurring on the palms, soles and other parts of the body such as the buttocks and thighs. Vesicular lesions and ulcers may also be found in the oral cavity. Sometimes patients present mainly with painful ulcers at the back of the mouth, namely herpangina, without rash on the hands or feet," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"HFMD occurs throughout the year. A summer peak usually occurs from May to July. As young children are more susceptible, parents should stay alert to their health. Institutional outbreaks may occur where HFMD can easily spread among young children with close contact," the spokesman added.

To prevent HFMD, members of the public, and especially the management of institutions, should take heed of the following preventive measures:

- Maintain good air circulation;
- Wash hands before meals and after going to the toilet or handling diapers or other stool-soiled materials;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly, especially when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and oral discharges properly;
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as furniture, toys and commonly shared items with 1:99 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes, and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
- Use absorbent disposable towels to wipe away obvious contaminants such as respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, and then disinfect the surface and neighbouring areas with 1:49 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
- Children who are ill should be kept out of school until their fever and rash have subsided and all the vesicles have dried and crusted;
- Avoid going to overcrowded places; and
- Parents should maintain close communication with schools to let them know the latest situation of the sick children.

The public may visit the CHP's page on [HFMD and EV71 infection](#) and [Public Health Advice for Play Facilities](#) for more information.

FS continues visit programme in Beijing

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, continued his visit to Beijing today (June 21).

This morning, joined by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, and the Deputy Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Mr Arthur Yuen, Mr Chan met with the Deputy Governor of the People's Bank of China, Mr Pan Gongsheng. Both sides discussed a range of topics, such as maintenance of financial stability, internationalisation of

the Renminbi (RMB) and the operation of Bond Connect.

Mr Chan and Mr Lau then called on the China International Trade Representative and Vice Minister of Commerce, Mr Fu Ziying.

Following this was a meeting with the Minister of Finance, Mr Liu Kun. Also joining the meeting was the Chairman of the Insurance Authority, Dr Moses Cheng. Mr Chan expressed his gratitude to the Ministry of Finance for supporting the development of Hong Kong's financial services industry, and for issuing in Hong Kong RMB sovereign bonds nine years in a row, as well as US dollar sovereign bonds last October. Mr Chan also introduced a host of initiatives launched by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government to promote further development of the bond market, green finance, and the insurance and reinsurance industry.

In the afternoon, Mr Chan addressed a finance seminar and a sharing session for Hong Kong student interns. Under the summer internship and mentorship programme organised by the Fin Society, Hong Kong university students could work in financial institutions in the Mainland as interns to broaden their horizons, and to learn more the latest developments of the financial sector in the Mainland. Today's seminar was the highlight of the internship programme. It drew over 200 participants, including government officials and practitioners from the financial sector and university students from both Beijing and Hong Kong.

Tomorrow (June 22), Mr Chan will attend the ACCA Global Summit before departing for Hong Kong in the afternoon.

SFH visits Tung Chung (with photos)

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, visited Tung Chung today (June 21) to learn about the North Lantau Hospital (NLH) Phase II development and the operation of the Pei Mei Village Refuse Collection Point.

Accompanied by the Chairman of the Island District Council (IDC), Mr Chow Yuk-tong, and the District Officer (Islands), Mr Anthony Li, Professor Chan first inspected the site between the soccer pitch at On Tung Street and NLH, which is reserved for the hospital's Phase II development.

After that, she visited NLH to understand more about the Phase II development as well as the additional services provided by the hospital and the services of its community health centre.

"The Hospital Authority (HA) has been developing the medical services provided by NLH in an orderly manner to meet the increasing medical needs in

the district. In 2018-19, NLH will provide 50 additional beds, comprising 20 acute beds, 20 extended care beds and 10 ambulatory care beds. Moreover, paediatric and urology services will also come into operation," she said.

Professor Chan noted that the Government has been striving to take forward major public hospital development projects to cater for the growing healthcare service demand and to improve existing services. The Government earmarked \$200 billion to implement the first 10-year Hospital Development Plan (HDP) in 2016, including the construction of a new acute hospital, redevelopment and expansion of 11 hospitals, and construction of three community health centres and a supporting services centre. The HDP will provide more healthcare facilities including some 5 000 additional beds and 94 additional operating theatres as well as increasing the capacity of specialist and general outpatient clinics.

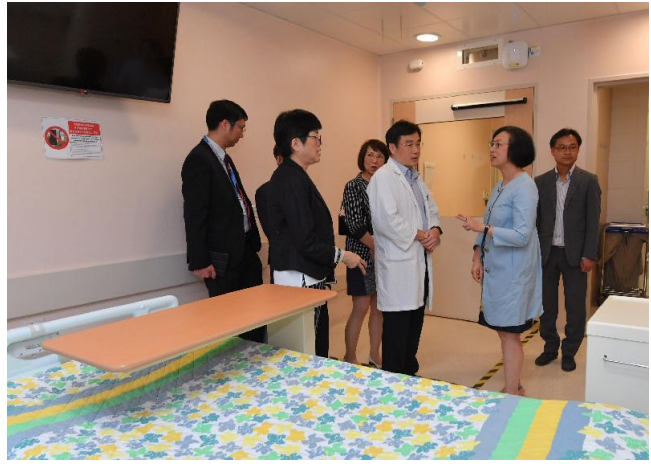
Professor Chan noted that the Government has invited the HA to start planning the second HDP to meet the increasing demand for healthcare services due to demographic changes.

Professor Chan then inspected the Pa Mei Refuse Collection Point (RCP) in Tung Chung and was briefed by staff of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) on the hygiene conditions of the RCP and the application of Internet protocol cameras. She learned that beyond daily cleaning services, the FEHD also deploys staff to strengthen patrol and enforcement actions to combat illegal dumping of refuse.

The Government attaches great importance to the environmental hygiene conditions of various districts. The FEHD has been improving refuse collection services, and is contemplating the introduction of new facilities to help enhance work efficiency, such as the adoption of refuse bins and hydraulic refuse hoppers equipped with compaction devices.

Moreover, the FEHD has commenced a one-year pilot scheme on installation of Internet protocol cameras at about 80 refuse deposit black spots in the territory to combat illegal dumping of refuse with a view to improving environmental hygiene.

Earlier in the day, Professor Chan also took the opportunity to meet with members of the IDC to listen to their views on various issues relating to healthcare and environmental hygiene in the district.



[DH raids retail shop for suspected illegal sale of unregistered pharmaceutical products \(with photo\)](#)

The Department of Health (DH) and the Police today (June 21) conducted a joint operation and raided a retail shop in Sha Tin for suspected illegal sale of unregistered pharmaceutical products, which were found to contain undeclared controlled ingredients.

Acting upon a public complaint, samples of products were purchased from the above shop for analysis. Test results from the Government Laboratory confirmed that the samples of three products contained undeclared Part 1 poisons, which are as follows:

	Product name	Part 1 poisons found
1.	Zang Yao Xuan Du Wang Cao Ben Ru Gao	Clobetasol propionate and miconazole
2.	Miao Jia Du Xuan Gao	Clobetasol propionate, miconazole and ketoconazole
3.	è<-è0~ çš@ç™fçŽ<â-·â%, (no English name)	Miconazole

During the operation, two women aged 31 and 61 were arrested by the Police for suspected illegal sale and possession of Part 1 poisons and unregistered pharmaceutical products. The DH's investigation is continuing.

Clobetasol propionate is a steroid substance used for treating inflammation. Inappropriate or excessive application of steroids could cause skin problems and body-wide side effects like moon face, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, muscle atrophy, adrenal insufficiency and osteoporosis. Products containing clobetasol propionate should be used under a doctor's directions and be supplied in a pharmacy under the supervision of a registered pharmacist upon a doctor's prescription. Miconazole and ketoconazole are used for the treatment of fungal infections with side effects including local irritation and sensitivity reactions.

According to the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap 138), all pharmaceutical products must be registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong before they can be legally sold in the market. Illegal sale or possession of unregistered pharmaceutical products and Part 1 poisons are criminal offences. The maximum penalty for each offence is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment.

"The public should not buy or use products of doubtful composition or from unknown sources. All registered pharmaceutical products should carry a Hong Kong registration number on the package in the format of 'HK-XXXXX'. Safety, quality and efficacy of unregistered pharmaceutical products are not guaranteed. Those who have purchased the products concerned should stop using them and consult healthcare professionals if in doubt or feeling unwell after use," a DH spokesman said.

They can submit the products to the DH's Drug Office in Room 1856, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, during office hours for disposal.

