

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, at a media session at the Legislative Council Complex today (February 20):

Reporter: So far have you got enough votes to pass the ban on e-cigarettes? Secondly, can you clarify, under the Greater Bay Area framework, about the patient transfer plan of non-emergency patients? Are you talking about Hong Kong people or Mainland residents?

Secretary for Food and Health: The objective of our ban on e-cigarettes (and other alternative smoking products) is to protect the health of our next generation, our young people. I think these new or alternative smoking products are often packaged as less harmful and also attractive to young people. So in order to continue our hard work on tobacco control and reducing our smoking prevalence, especially protecting our young people's health from not being jeopardised, in the last Policy Address, the Chief Executive has announced the banning of e-cigarettes and alternative smoking products altogether including import, manufacture, distribution, promotion and sale. Of course, we have tried our best to explain our policy to all legislators and political parties. We try our best to explain and answer questions. On one hand, we have staunch supporters. On the other hand, there are legislators who hold different opinions. We will continue to try our best to let the legislators and different political parties understand. This is really the wish of not only the Government, but also the general public, the medical and health profession, the education sector, parents as well as young people.

Regarding your question about the Greater Bay Area, the focus is on Hong Kong people who live in the Greater Bay Area. The suggested transfer measure is for Hong Kong people. Throughout the year, those Hong Kong people who live in the Greater Bay Area have expressed a need for having better and facilitated transportation (of non-emergency Hong Kong patients). It is just to explore how this could be taken forward.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)