

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 after attending a public event today (November 4):

Reporter: When will the high risk pool be setting up? Even that it can't be implemented in a few years, how do the Government ensure that the Voluntary Health Insurance Scheme (VHIS) is attractive enough?

Secretary for Food and Health: The Government has just passed the law to (allow) reduction in tax (in connection with the premiums paid) for VHIS, so it will be launched on April 1, 2019. As far as the basic requirement is concerned, we have already achieved 10 basic requirements. For the high risk pool, we will continue to look into it because we were not able to reach a consensus at the time when we did the consultation. Therefore, we may take a few years, to first launch the VHIS and gain some experience in this insurance scheme. There are lots of work that our VHIS office would have to do in the coming few years. So building on the experience, we will see how best to move forward including looking into the possibility to create a high risk pool.

Reporter: With respect to the Japanese research, would the Government have any respective measures to prevent the outbreak of the virus?

Secretary for Food and Health: As far as the avian flu risk is concerned, the Government has been doing a lot, both in the local farms as well as in the markets selling live poultry. A lot of bio-security measures and surveillance are already on-going. We will continue to communicate with the international organisations and health organisations to understand more about avian flu and the risk. We will continue to do our surveillance, our work and bio-security measures in terms of live poultry.

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