

中華人民共和國香港特別行政區

HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

梁劉柔芬議員

立法會

HON MRS SOPHIE LEUNG, SBS, JP
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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23rd February 2004Chairman
The Legislative Council Panel on Health Services

Dear Chairman,

Cervical Screening Programme

I am writing to support the captioned programme and to appeal to you and all Panel Members for its prompt implementation for the benefit of women in Hong Kong.

Cervical cancer is one of the most common cancers among women in Hong Kong. However, the coverage rate of cervical screening among women is low and there has been much misunderstanding over the screening process, which hindered the prevention against the cancer. I am indeed glad to learn that the Department of Health would launch a Cervical Screening Programme on 8th March 2004. This is a much-needed programme to improve women's health status as incidence and mortality of the cancer would be remarkably reduced by early detection through this programme.

When we discussed this subject during our meeting on 9 February 2004, some members suggested that the Administration should review the proposed fee of \$120 to see if there is any room for downward adjustment.

We have learnt that the unit cost of a cervical smear under the programme is \$206 and the proposed fee is \$120, consistent with the subsidy level of Women Health Service at around 40%. It falls within the acceptable range of \$100 to \$200 suggested by the Women Focus Group Study commissioned by the Department of Health in 2002. Moreover, since the test

is done only once every three years after two negative smears in two consecutive years, the average annual cost is only \$40 which is expected to be affordable to most women. However for those who have financial difficulties, the existing waiver policy adopted by the Administration would continue to be available. All in all, the current proposed fee of \$120 is, I believe, both acceptable and reasonable with a mechanism already in place to assist women in need.

In case if the fee is set too low, I am concerned the private sector would be driven out of the programme and the spirit of the partnership between the private and public sector would be jeopardized. This will be undesirable considering the vital role played by the private sector in making this programme a success.

In view of the above, I appeal to you and all Panel Members to support a prompt implementation of the programme at the proposed fee of \$120. I trust that you will agree women in Hong Kong should not be kept waiting any longer for this worthy programme for their health protection.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Sophie LEUNG

cc: all other Panel members