

Our ref: FH/H/1/5 Pt. 89
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5 December 2007

Ms Mary So
Clerk to Panel
Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council
8 Jackson Road
Central
(By Fax : 2521 7518)

Dear Ms So,

**Legislative Council Panel on Health Services
Refund Policy on the Obstetric Service Charge
for Non-eligible Persons**

I refer to item 1 of the list of follow-up actions in LC Paper No. CB(2)264/07-08(02). At the Panel meeting on 30 April 2007, the Administration was requested to respond to the Panel's suggestion of refunding fees paid for the booking of public obstetric services if the delivery did not take place eventually due to valid reasons such as miscarriage.

The Hospital Authority (HA) has implemented the new obstetric services booking arrangements since 1 February 2007, with a view to ensuring that local pregnant women would be provided with proper and priority obstetric services and restricting the number of non-local pregnant women giving birth in Hong Kong to a level that can be supported by Hong Kong's health care system; as well as to deter dangerous behaviour by non-local pregnant women in seeking last-minute hospital admission before delivery through the Accident and Emergency Departments.

All the fees paid for booking for public obstetric services were non-refundable. The objective of the no-refund policy is to contain the number of non-local pregnant women using the public obstetric services and to minimize the abuse of the obstetric booking system and hence waste of resource. Having

considered the actual situation after implementation of the new obstetric services booking arrangements, the HA has reviewed the no-refund policy and decided to provide refund under two categories of special circumstances. The first category is the occurrence of miscarriage, termination of pregnancy or still birth; while the second category is a change of status of the pregnant women from Non-eligible person (NEP) to Eligible person (EP) during the period between payment of fees for booking and delivery. The abovementioned refund policy was implemented starting from 29 October 2007 after publication in the gazette.

For NEPs who have paid \$39,000 for the obstetric package charges in public hospitals, partial refund of \$20,000 will be made for justified cases fulfilling the criteria in the first category, after deducting those charges for the HA hospital services they have received for the concerned pregnancy. Under the second category, pregnant women with a change of status from NEP to EP during the period between payment of the package fee and delivery will be fully refunded for the obstetric package charges, after deducting those charges for the HA hospital services they have received for the concerned pregnancy.

Those NEPs who have paid on or after 1 February 2007 and fulfill the relevant criteria can apply for a refund. The application can be submitted to the respective hospital with relevant supporting documents.

Yours sincerely,

(Kirk YIP)
for Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food

cc Dr Beatrice CHENG, Hospital Authority