

政府總部  
公務員事務局  
香港中環雪廠街11號  
中區政府合署西座



**CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU  
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT**  
WEST WING  
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES  
11 ICE HOUSE STREET  
HONG KONG

本函檔號 Our Ref.: PC 700/000/1 Pt.19

來函檔號 Your Ref.: CB1/PL/PS

電話號碼 Tel. No.: 2810 3083

傳真號碼 Fax No.: 2501 0749

電郵地址 E-mail Address: csbts@csb.gov.hk

網址 Homepage Address: <http://www.csb.gov.hk>

14 April 2009

Clerk to Panel on Public Service  
(Attn.: Ms Sarah Yuen)  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Yuen,

**Panel on Public Service  
Meeting on 16 March 2009**

I refer to the motion proposed by Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou and seconded by Hon IP Wai-ming, which was passed by the Panel on Public Service on 16 March 2009. The Administration's written response is set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Under the existing provisions in the Civil Service Regulations (CSRs), save for the charges applicable to hospital maintenance, dentures and dental appliances as provided for in the CSRs, civil service eligible persons are entitled to free medical treatment and services, X-ray examinations and medicines, but only when these benefits are provided by the Government's Department of Health (DH) or the medical facilities of the Hospital Authority (HA). Every endeavour will be made to give civil service eligible persons the best available medical attendance and treatment through these medical facilities, but the medical officer in charge of the case has sole discretion as to the nature and the amount of treatment provided.

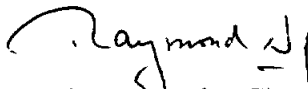
The Government (as an employer) is committed to honouring its employment contractual obligation of providing medical and dental benefits to civil service eligible persons. We have worked and will continue to work closely with DH and HA in exploring and implementing measures to improve civil service medical benefits. In recent years, the Government has been increasing its expenditure on provision of medical benefits to civil service eligible persons. The annual expenditure on the provision of medical service by HA to civil service amounted to over \$2 billion. For services provided by DH, the annual expenditure is estimated to increase to \$699.8 million in 2009-10.

At present, DH does not operate any Chinese medicine clinics (CMCs). With regard to CMCs under HA, as explained at the Panel meeting on 16 March 2009, they are operated under a tripartite model under which the HA collaborates with a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and a local university for each CMC. They are research-oriented and are intended to promote the development of "evidence-based" Chinese medicine practice through clinical research, develop standards in Chinese medicine practice, improve Chinese medicine training and develop models of interface between western and Chinese medicine. Unlike the general outpatient clinics operated by HA, the CMCs operate on a self-financing basis.

In view of the mode of operation and financing of CMCs, the service they provide cannot be regarded as a standard general outpatient service of HA. As such, the service provided by these CMCs falls outside the scope of civil service medical benefits. We will review the matter if the nature and mode of service delivery of the CMCs under HA were to be changed significantly in future.

We are fully aware of staff's concern over the current provision of medical and dental services to civil service eligible persons. We welcome suggestions from the staff sides, and have been discussing with them through the Standing Committee on Medical and Dental Facilities for Civil Servants (SCMDF) on possible measures to improve the provision of civil service medical benefits. We will continue to discuss with the staff sides through the SCMDF all feasible proposals that can improve the medical benefits for civil service eligible persons. In considering any improvement proposals, we will take into account the Government's financial capability and the cost-effectiveness of the proposals.

Yours sincerely,



(Raymond NG)

for Secretary for the Civil Service

c.c. Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Chairman, Legislative Council Panel on Public Service  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

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