



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局

Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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8 January 2013

Ms Elyssa Wong
Clerk to Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms Wong,

**Follow-up to Panel on Health Services
Meeting of 17 December 2012**

Strategy and Measures to Prevent and Control Seasonal Influenza

The Panel on Health Services discussed the captioned subject at its meeting on 17 December 2012. I write to provide supplementary information requested by Members of the Panel at the meeting.

Implications of extending influenza vaccination programme to children

The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SC) under the Centre for Health Protection reviews local and overseas scientific evidence regarding influenza vaccination and recommends high risk groups that should receive the vaccination before the influenza season each year. The Government implements the Government Vaccination Programme (GVP) and Vaccination Subsidy Programmes (VSS) on the basis of these recommendations. Other members of the public may consult their family doctors to receive seasonal influenza vaccination for personal protection.

At the Panel meeting, a Member requested that the Administration provide an estimate on the implications of extending influenza vaccination programme among children. The 2012 mid-year population (provisional) of children aged 6–11 is 304,800 and may serve as an estimate of the primary school children population. Under the existing VSS, the Government provides \$130 in subsidy to private doctors for each dose of influenza vaccine, which covers the cost of the vaccine and injection. As such, the additional cost of an influenza vaccination programme extended to primary school children may be approximated by multiplying the two figures to give approximately \$39.6 million. However, it should be emphasised that the Government will continue to implement vaccination programmes on the basis of the SC's expert advice, and therefore has no plans to expand the target groups of the GVP or VSS to children aged 6 or above.

Implications of winter influenza surge at public hospitals

In preparation for the coming influenza peak season, public hospitals are ready to implement a variety of enhanced measures which have been set out in the Panel paper. At the meeting, the Chairman requested the Administration to provide specific details on the additional resources that will be deployed. According to the Hospital Authority's estimate based on previous years' experience, the financial requirement to cater for additional 20% of emergency admissions to medical wards for a two months' winter surge period is about \$90 million.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Estrella Cheung)

for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c. Controller, Centre for Health Protection
 Chief Executive, Hospital Authority

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