



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 April 2016

Clerk to Panel
Legislative Council Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
(Attn.: Ms Maisie Lam)

Dear Ms Lam,

Supply of vaccines for Hong Kong residents

I refer to your letter dated 29 March 2016 to the Secretary for Food and Health, requesting a written reply in relation to the enquiries raised by Hon Elizabeth Quat and Hon Kwok Ka-ki on the supply of vaccines for Hong Kong residents. In consultation with the Department of Health (DH), we would like to give our reply in the ensuing paragraphs.

Policy objectives of the vaccination services

2. Both the public and private healthcare sectors in Hong Kong provide vaccination services. For the public healthcare sector, 31 Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) of the DH provide health promotion and disease prevention services for babies and young children from birth to 5 years of age (child health services), including health and developmental surveillance, parenting and free vaccination against 11 infectious diseases for eligible infants and children¹ under the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme. It has always been the DH's policy to provide services mainly for local children.

¹ Eligible infants and children are those of the following categories:

- * A holder of Hong Kong Identity Card (HKID Card) issued under the Registration of Persons Ordinance (Cap. 177), except those who obtained their HKID Card by virtue of a previous permission to land or remain in Hong Kong granted to them and for whom such permission has expired or ceased to be valid;
- * Children who are Hong Kong residents and under 11 years of age; or
- * Other persons approved by the Director of Health.

However, taking into consideration the possible need of some non-Hong Kong born or non-eligible infants and children to receive vaccination, and the overall public health and immunisation situation in Hong Kong, the DH allows non-eligible infants and children to book an appointment for child health services when there is spare service capacity and subject to a fee².

The latest situation of vaccination and related measures in Hong Kong

3. The DH has been closely monitoring the utilisation of services of the MCHCs. Recently, there is a trend of increase in the number of new cases of non-eligible infants and children in the MCHCs from an average of 110 cases per month in 2015 to 135 cases per month in 2016 (as at 29 March). Although the above situation posed no immediate impact on the services of the MCHCs, the number of telephone enquiries and appointment bookings received by the DH from parents of non-eligible infants and children surged from several cases per day to around 120 cases on 29 March 2016. Hence, the DH has decided to put in place additional measures since 1 April 2016 to accord priority to local children in the provision of services. A quota has therefore been set for non-eligible infants and children (children who are not Hong Kong residents) at a total of 120 new cases per month in the 31 MCHCs under the DH with effect from 1 April 2016.

4. Before the quota was set, the appointment bookings of non-eligible infants and children in some MCHCs had already been scheduled for April 2016 or after. With the quota system of 120 new cases per month in place, it means that the quotas for new case bookings by non-eligible infants and children in all of these MCHCs (for example, Fanling MCHC and Kowloon City MCHC) in April 2016 have already been filled.

5. At present, the attendances of child health services in the MCHCs under the DH are around 50 000 per month, about 5 000 attendances are new cases. The monthly quota of 120 new cases for non-eligible infants and children constitutes a very small proportion and will not affect the services provided for eligible infants and children. The monthly quota of 120 new cases is shared by the MCHCs according to their scale of operation, with the quota for each MCHC ranging from two to seven cases. A higher quota will be allocated to MCHCs on a larger scale of operation as they have more manpower.

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Service	Eligible persons (per attendance)	Non-eligible persons (per attendance)
Child health	No charge	\$365 (Basic charge for each attendance) ^(Note 1)
Pneumococcal vaccine	No charge	\$405 (per dose) (Extra charge)
Varicella vaccine	No charge	\$245 (per dose) (Extra charge)

Note 1: Including vaccines under the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme (excluding pneumococcal vaccine and varicella vaccine)

6. In setting the quota, the DH has considered various factors, including the number of births in Hong Kong, attendances of eligible persons and non-eligible persons in the MCHCs and manpower arrangements. The DH will continue to closely monitor the utilisation of services by non-eligible infants and children, and may adjust the quota or withhold their new case bookings if necessary.

Supply of vaccines in Hong Kong

7. The DH will, based on the number of births in Hong Kong and the quantity of vaccines previously provided for non-eligible infants and children, purchase vaccines for the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme from suppliers through procurement contracts in accordance with established procedures and requirements. This will ensure a sufficient and stable supply of vaccines for the programme.

8. Currently, the DH purchases seven types of vaccines for the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme through procurement contracts. The contractual period for each type of vaccine is two years and the total number of doses of vaccines procured is about 2.4 million. There is no shortage of vaccines for the programme at present.

The private healthcare sector

9. Although the DH does not maintain the statistics on vaccination services provided by private clinics or hospitals, it communicates closely with medical professional bodies and vaccine suppliers to monitor the vaccination services and supply of vaccines in the private healthcare sector. It will request the suppliers to import more vaccines to meet the demand of the local market when necessary.

10. Thank you for the concerns of the Legislative Council Health Panel over this matter.

Yours sincerely,



(Miss Fiona Chau)

for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c. Director of Health (Attn: Dr Tina Chan)