



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

Our ref: FH/H/1/5 Pt. 102
Your ref:

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3 November 2009

Ms Mary So
Clerk to Panel
Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council
8 Jackson Road
Central

Dear Ms So,

Policy on use of drugs in life threatening emergency situations

I refer to item 11 of Appendix VI to LC Paper No. CB(2)11/09-10. At the Panel meeting held on 19 June 2009, Members discussed the captioned issue and the Administration was requested to provide the following in writing -

- (a) the relevant extract from the minutes of the Drug Utilisation Review Committee's meeting held in March 2006 regarding its relevant consideration on the use of a self-financed item or special drug outside its indications specified in the Hospital Authority (HA) Drug Formulary; and
- (b) the more explicit guideline to be promulgated by the HA to reiterate the policy on the use of drug in immediate life threatening emergency situations after the internal consultation within HA.

For (a) above, the relevant extract of minutes of meeting is at **Annex A**. For (b) above, the relevant HA guideline on “Use of drugs in immediate life threatening emergency situations” is at **Annex B**.

Yours sincerely,



(Kirk Yip)

for Secretary for Food and Health

Encl

c.c. Hospital Authority

**Extract of minutes of the 34th HA Drug Utilisation Review Committee meeting
held on 2 March 2006**

"4.5 Handling of SFI drugs for use in emergency situations - In case of emergency situations, if the use of an SFI drug [drug that was either under the SFI category, or under the Special category but its use was outside the specified Formulary Management Indications] was considered necessary based on clinician's professional judgement, and no other alternatives were available, the drug should not be charged as SFI."



Ref:HA/820/10/6

29 June 2009

Hospital Authority Head Office
Operations Circular No. 17/2009

Use of drugs in immediate life threatening emergency situations

(Note: This circular should be read by all professional staff)

Purpose

The objective of this circular is to set out Hospital Authority's explicit policy and operational guidelines on the use of drugs in immediate life threatening emergency situations.

Background

2. It is the Government's long established policy that no one should be deprived of appropriate medical care because of lack of means. Saving life is always the first priority of the Hospital Authority (HA), regardless of a person's financial position. In accordance with this HA guiding principle, no person should be charged for needed drugs in immediate life threatening emergency situation beyond the standard fees and charges.

3. The objective of the Hospital Authority Drug Formulary (the Formulary) is to ensure equitable access to cost effective drugs of proven efficacy and safety, through standardisation of drug policy and drug utilisation in all HA hospitals and clinics.

4. In designing the Formulary, HA was guided by the principle that public healthcare resources should be utilised with maximal effect of healthcare and provide equitable access by all patients. Special considerations have been given during the development of the Formulary to ensure that drugs used in immediate life threatening emergency situations are included in the Formulary as General or Special drug and be covered by standard fees and charges.

5. It is the existing HA policy that in emergency situations, if it is considered necessary to use a Self-financed or Special Drug outside its indications specified in the Formulary based on clinician's professional judgment, and if there is no other alternative available, the drug should not be charged as a Self Financed Item (SFI). The above policy is now revised to make explicit on scope and coverage; and remove any potential uncertainty.

Policy and Operational Procedures

Policy

6. It is the HA policy that a drug given under immediate life threatening emergency situation deemed necessary by the clinician should not be charged outside the standard fees and charges. This policy should apply to all drugs, including registered and unregistered drugs; drugs under the Formulary (general, special drugs used within and outside the specified indications, SFIs with or without safety net) and non-formulary drugs; in-label use (i.e. used within the registered indications), off-label use (i.e. used outside the registered indications).

Operational procedure on use of drug(s) in immediate life threatening emergency situations

7. Under the policy in paragraph 6 above, individual hospitals should develop own operational procedure according to the following guiding principles:

- (a) There should be a decision process involving a reasonably senior doctor who is available and accessible for timely decision making as to whether the patient is under an immediate life threatening emergency condition and whether the drug(s) is/are clinically indicated for this patient;
- (b) There should be a mechanism to allow the doctor to have prompt access to and urgent supply of the needed drug to deliver the immediate life saving treatment promptly to patients with proper documentation and monitoring. An example of the mechanism would be to allow the doctor to make verbal request to Pharmacy together with the Medication Administration Record;
- (c) There should be established evidence on efficacy, effectiveness and safety to guide clinicians on the use of the drug for immediate life saving purpose and;



- (d) Clinical departments should anticipate the use of certain drugs for emergency life saving purposes and set out standing clinical guidelines to guide clinicians' decisions on the use of such drugs as far as possible.
- (e) To cater for the use of normally chargeable drugs in an immediate life threatening emergency situation, hospitals should have mechanism in place for doctor to certify that the patient requires the concerned drug(s) under specified clinical indications for treatment of specific immediate life threatening clinical conditions. The certification (Annex) should subsequently be returned through the Chief of Service to the Department Manager (Pharmacy) for record purpose and subsequent review by the Hospital Drug and Therapeutic Committee.

Enquiries

- 8. Please direct your enquiries concerning this circular to Mr Benjamin Kwong of the Chief Pharmacist's office at 2515 2474.


(Dr W L CHEUNG)
Director (Cluster Services)

Encl.

**Hospital Authority
Form for Certification of Use of
Drug (otherwise Chargeable) on patient under Immediate Life
Threatening Emergency Condition**

To: DM(Pharm) via COS

<h2>Patient gum label</h2>

I certify that the patient is under immediate life-threatening emergency condition and the drug as stated below should be covered under standard hospital fees and charges.

1. Drug prescribed: _____

2. Dosage: _____

3. Date of Use: _____

4. Patient's condition for the treatment: _____

5. Justification for the use of the drug for treatment of the patient's condition and the drug's indication: _____

Name of the senior doctor authorising the use: _____

Signature of the doctor prescribing the drug: _____

Name of doctor: _____

Date: _____

