

**For information on  
30 November 2009**

**Legislative Council Panel on Health Services  
Human Swine Influenza Vaccination Programme**

**PURPOSE**

This paper informs Members of the Administration's announcement on the arrangement of the Human Swine Influenza Vaccination Programme today. A copy of the relevant press releases and the remarks made by the Food and Health Bureau regarding the announcement is at **Annex** for Members' reference.

Food and Health Bureau  
November 2009

Opening remarks by USFH on human swine flu vaccination programme

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Following is the opening remarks by the Under Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Gabriel Leung, at the press conference announcing details of human swine influenza vaccination programme this afternoon (November 30):

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I just like to very briefly recap the key points of what I just said in Chinese. This exercise of human swine flu vaccination is a very large-scale programme designed to protect the health of Hong Kong people, especially the five key target groups and these include first, 830,000 people who are 65 and over, and 710,000 people who comprise groups including those who live in residential facilities for the elderly, chronic disease patients under 65 as well as pregnant women. The third group comprises 380,000 children aged six months to just below six years. The fourth group are 150,000 healthcare workers and finally, about 1,500 people who work in the live pig trade.

As I said, this programme is designed to protect health as we prepare to enter the winter peak season or the second wave of this pandemic. We will be deploying a large number of colleagues to implement this programme, including 300 additional new staff in the Department of Health (DH) and the Hospital Authority (HA). The programme will take place across a total of some 220 HA and DH hospitals and clinics, including 100 clinics and 41 hospitals of HA and 82 clinics and centres operated by the department. The operation hours will remain the same as they are currently, but we will keep very closely in view of actual demand and make appropriate adjustments accordingly.

In parallel, we also look forward to working closely with private sector colleagues who will help in vaccinating many of their own high-risk patients, with subsidies from the Government amounting to \$129 provided through this programme. We anticipate a large number of private doctors will participate and details about their clinic locations, extra charges if any, etc will be posted online for public reference.

Finally, I would like to make a very strong appeal to everybody who belongs to the five high-risk groups. The Scientific Committee operating under the auspices of the Centre for Health Protection has very carefully weighed the pros and cons of human swine influenza vaccination, including the possible adverse effects of the vaccine but also the potential hazards posed by infection by the human swine flu virus and subsequent morbidity or complications facing these five high-risk groups. And their conclusion is the benefits far outweigh the potential risk. So I would really sincerely appeal to those who are in the five high-risk categories, their caregivers as well as their parents of these individuals to get vaccinated soon when we roll out this programme in the public sector on December 21 and the private sector on December 28.

Ends/Monday, November 30, 2009

## Government announces details of human swine influenza vaccination programme

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A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau announced today (November 30) that the Government will launch the human swine influenza vaccination programme on December 21, under which some two million people falling under the five target groups, namely chronic patients and pregnant women, children aged from six months to under six years, elderly aged 65 and above, healthcare workers and workers in the pig industry, will be given priority to receive vaccinations on a voluntary base.

"The hospitals, clinics and medical centres under the Department of Health and Hospital Authority (HA) will provide free vaccination service to the target groups. In addition, starting from December 28, three of the five target groups can choose to vaccinate at private clinics on government subsidy. This arrangement is meant to provide more choices to them," the spokesman said.

The three target groups are chronic patients and pregnant women, children aged from six months to under six years and the elderly aged 65 and above.

They can opt to receive vaccination from private doctors who have joined the human swine influenza vaccination subsidy scheme. The Government will subsidise them an amount of \$129, including \$79 per dose for the vaccine cost and \$50 for the injection fee.

Information including the address of the private clinics which has taken part in the subsidy scheme and any additional fees charged will be uploaded to the website of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health (<http://www.chp.gov.hk>) for public reference. Participating doctors are also required to display logos of the scheme for easy recognition.

"We encourage the target groups to receive vaccination where they normally go for medical services," the spokesman said.

For the remaining two target groups, healthcare workers can receive vaccination from their serving medical institutions or HA clinics, while workers in the pig industry can get free vaccinations from HA's designated clinics.

"Human swine flu cases continued to be found all over the world and the situation in Hong Kong may become more serious with the arrival of the winter influenza peak. People belonging to the target groups are appealed to receive vaccination to reduce the chance of infection and safeguard their health," the spokesman said.

"Although there are reports of feeling unwell after human swine flu vaccination, abnormality was not found so far. Receiving vaccination is still safe and that members of the public should not be over-worried," the spokesman said.

"We believe that the first batch of 500,000 dosages will be sufficient to meet the initial demand of the target groups. The remaining 2.5 million dosages will arrive within January next year. People who are not in the target groups can choose to receive vaccination from private clinics on their own costs after the second batch of vaccines arrives," the spokesman added.

Ends/Monday, November 30, 2009

## HA gets ready for Government Human Swine Influenza Vaccination Programme

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To tie in with the Government's human swine influenza (HSI) vaccination programme, the Hospital Authority (HA) will start to provide free vaccinations to the target groups of Hong Kong residents from December 21, 2009 at public hospitals and clinics.

The HA spokesman today (Monday, November 30) said that the following target groups will receive HSI vaccinations in public hospitals and clinics:

1. All chronic patients who are regularly followed up at HA general outpatient and specialist clinics (chronic illnesses include cardiovascular [except hypertension without complication] and lung disease; obesity or metabolic or kidney disease; immunodeficiency; chronic neurological condition; children and adolescents [aged six-month to 18-year-old] on long-term aspirin therapy)

2. All pregnant women with antenatal appointments in HA obstetric clinics

3. Elderly aged 65 or above

4. Chronic patients aged below 65 who do not attend HA clinics but with referral from the Department of Health

The chronic patients and pregnant women of public hospitals who wish to receive vaccination service should attend the general outpatient clinics or specialist clinics and bring along relevant documents, including Hong Kong Identity Card and appointment slip. They will be vaccinated if assessed as clinically suitable by clinic staff.

For all elderly aged 65 or above and those chronic patients aged below 65 but not HA patients and with referral from Department of Health, they would be able to receive vaccination service in the 61 general outpatient clinics under HA.

Furthermore, workers in the pig industry and healthcare workers as referred by the Department of Health will also receive HSI vaccinations in the 18 designated general outpatient clinics of HA from December 21

2009.

The HA spokesman stresses that the HSI vaccine is safe. “Protection from HSI vaccination develops about two weeks after getting a shot. The side effects are similar to those of seasonal flu vaccination. It is usually well tolerated apart from occasional soreness at the injection site. In rare instances, the recipient may experience fever, muscle and joint pains, and tiredness beginning six to 12 hours after vaccination and lasting up to two days.”

“People who have flu symptoms, fever or are severely ill at the time of vaccination should defer the vaccination and wait until they have recovered. Patients can enquire at the respective specialist or general out-patient clinics where they are attending; or make general enquiry at the HA hotline 2300 6555 during office hours,” the spokesman remarked.