



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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29 December 2017

Ms Maise LAM
Clerk to Panel
Panel on Health Services
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Fax: 2185 7845)

Dear Ms Lam,

Panel on Health Services
Follow-up to the meeting on 17 July 2017

I refer to the discussion on enhancement of medical fee waiver system of Hospital Authority ("HA") at the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Health Services held on 17 July 2017. In response to the Members' request for supplementary information on the medical fee waiver, our reply is as follows.

2. The annual number of applicants, who were not Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") recipients, granted a medical fee waiver from 2012/13 to 2016/17 is as follows –

Year	Number of applicants who were not on CSSA being granted a medical fee waiver (Eligible persons only)
2012/13	17 395
2013/14	16 501
2014/15	15 777
2015/16	14 631
2016/17	14 540

Note: The above statistics includes only medical fee waiver applications processed through e-Waiving System.

3. The annual number of approved medical fee waiver applications for non-CSSA recipients aged 65 to below 75 from 2012/13 to 2016/17 is set out in the following table –

Year	Number of approved medical fee waiver applications for non-CSSA recipients aged 65 to below 75 (Eligible persons only)
2012/13	2 951
2013/14	2 890
2014/15	2 844
2015/16	2 844
2016/17	3 138

Note: The above statistics includes only medical fee waiver applications processed through e-Waiving System.

4. Public healthcare services in Hong Kong are heavily subsidised by the Government such that the medical fees are affordable by the general public. To ensure that no one will be denied adequate medical care due to lack of means, the HA has put in place a medical fee waiver mechanism to provide assistance to needy patients.

5. In order to better address the healthcare service demand of the needy elderly and to reduce their medical expenses, the Government announced, in the Policy Address in January 2017, the extension of the medical fee waiver

for public healthcare services to cover the older Old Age Living Allowance (“OALA”) recipients with more financial needs, i.e. recipients aged 75 or above with assets not exceeding \$144,000 for elderly singletons and \$218,000 for elderly couples. For patients who are not granted medical fee waiver automatically, they could still seek financial assistance from Medical Social Workers stationed in the public hospitals if they cannot afford the medical fees and charges. The applicants’ eligibility for waiver is assessed based on both financial and non-financial criteria.

6. According to the statistics provided by the Social Welfare Department, there are around 190 000 and 180 000 OALA recipients aged 65 to 74 and aged 75 or above respectively with assets not exceeding \$144,000 for elderly singletons and \$218,000 for elderly couples. The financial implications of extending medical fee waiver to OALA recipients aged 65 to 74 with assets not exceeding \$144,000 for elderly singletons and \$218,000 for elderly couples would depend on the public healthcare services usage rate and pattern of such OALA recipients.

Yours sincerely,



(Clarissa Wan)

for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c. Chief Executive, Hospital Authority
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