



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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24 June 2019

Ms Maisie LAM  
Clerk to Panel on Health Services  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms LAM,

**Panel on Health Services  
Subcommittee on Issues Relating to the Support for Cancer Patients  
Meeting on 20 May 2019**

**Enquiry on Cancer Prevention and Screening**

Thank you for your letter dated 17 May 2019. Regarding the letter of Hon SHIU Ka-chun on 16 May 2019 (ref. LC Paper No. CB(2)1462/18-19(01)), our response, in consultation with the Department of Health, is set out at **Annex**.

Yours sincerely,

(Ronald HO)  
for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c.  
Director of Health (Attn.: Dr Rita Ho)

## Government's Response

### Questions (1) and (2)

The Government accords high importance to cancer prevention and control. As early as 2001, the Government established the Cancer Coordinating Committee ("CCC"). Chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health and comprising members who are cancer experts, academics, doctors in public and private sectors as well as public health professionals, the CCC formulates strategies on cancer prevention and control and steers the direction of work covering prevention and screening, surveillance, research and treatment. The Cancer Expert Working Group on Cancer Prevention and Screening ("CEWG") set up under the CCC regularly reviews local and international evidence and makes recommendations on cancer prevention and screening applicable to the local setting. So far, CEWG has made recommendations on prevention and screening for nine selected cancers, namely cervical, colorectal, breast, prostate, lung, liver, nasopharyngeal, thyroid and ovarian cancers.

2. Regarding the recommendations for breast cancer prevention and screening, the CEWG keeps in view the latest local and international scientific evidence. At present, the CEWG is of view that there is insufficient evidence to recommend for or against population-based mammography screening for asymptomatic women at average risk in Hong Kong. Individuals considering breast cancer screening should be adequately informed by doctors about the benefits and harms<sup>1</sup>.

### Questions (3) and (4)

3. In examining whether to introduce a population-based screening programme for a specific cancer (including breast cancer), the Government shall make reference to the CEWG's recommendations and carefully considers a number of factors, including the seriousness and prevalence of the cancer locally, accuracy and safety of the screening tests for the local population, as well as effectiveness in reducing incidence and mortality rates. The Government shall also give due consideration to the actual circumstances such as the feasibility, equity and cost-effectiveness of the screening programme and public acceptance.

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<sup>1</sup> For the recommendations for breast cancer prevention and screening made by the CEWG, please visit to the website of the Centre for Health Protection at [https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/breast\\_cancer\\_professional\\_hp.pdf](https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/breast_cancer_professional_hp.pdf).

4. As for asymptomatic women at average risk, the Government and the medical sector need to gather more research findings and data to explore whether it is appropriate to implement population-based breast cancer screening for this group of women in Hong Kong. In this regard, the Government has commissioned The University of Hong Kong to conduct a study on risk factors associated with breast cancer for local women so as to help formulate the future strategies for breast cancer screening in Hong Kong. The study is expected to be completed in the latter half of 2019. The Government will review and consider what type of screening is to be adopted for women of different risk profiles, having regard to the scientific evidence and outcome of the study.

5. Many risk factors for breast cancer are closely related to lifestyles, such as lack of physical activity, alcohol consumption, obesity after menopause, etc. The Government will continue education and publicity on breast health. Through mass media and collaboration with community partners and service providers, the Government will actively promote the adoption of healthy lifestyles (e.g. avoiding alcohol consumption, having a balanced diet, doing regular exercise, maintaining healthy body weight and waist circumference and prolonging breastfeeding duration, as the major preventive strategy) as the major preventive strategy. It will also promote the awareness of breast health among women for early detection of breast abnormalities and immediate medical attention.