



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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15 March 2019

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

Dear Ms LAM,

Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme

Thank you for your letter dated 5 March 2019. The information requested by Dr Hon Pierre CHAN regarding the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme is provided below.

(1) Do examples of abuse with large sums of money spent on buying spectacles, fish maw and milk powder, etc. contradict the objective of Elderly Health Vouchers and violate the rules on their use?

The Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme (the Scheme), launched on a pilot basis in January 2009 and regularised in January 2014, aims at providing financial incentives for elders to choose private primary healthcare services in their local communities that best suit their health needs. It aims at enhancing primary healthcare for the elderly and provide them with additional healthcare choices. Elders can then have better access to care and a continuity of care from their chosen providers.

To ensure that vouchers are actually used by the elders themselves, the sole purchase of products with vouchers is not allowed under the Scheme. However, vouchers can be used for the treatments provided by the participating healthcare service providers in their professional capacities to meet the healthcare needs of elders after consultations, as well as the medications and medical products, etc. prescribed and provided to the elderly patients during the course of treatment. In this regard, the healthcare service providers are to be held individually and professionally accountable for the voucher claims they make.

(2) What legislation do the Police and/or relevant enforcement agencies rely on for prosecution?

If any healthcare service provider is suspected of fraudulent practices or other criminal activities, the Department of Health (DH) will refer the case to the Police for follow-up and investigation, including prosecution if necessary. According to DH's latest record, one service provider was prosecuted and sentenced to imprisonment for making false voucher claims.

(3) Please provide in the table form below details of the number of voucher claim transactions and amount of vouchers claimed under the Scheme in 2016, 2017 and 2018 by types of healthcare service providers.

The tables below show the amount of vouchers claimed, the number of voucher claim transactions, the average and median amount of vouchers claimed per transaction, and the range of maximum voucher amount claimed in a transaction by types of healthcare services in 2016, 2017 and 2018:

**Amount of vouchers claimed
and number of voucher claim transactions in 2016**

Type of healthcare services	Amount of vouchers claimed (HK\$'000)	Number of voucher claim transactions	Average amount of vouchers claimed per transaction (HK\$)	Median amount of vouchers claimed per transaction (HK\$)	Range of maximum voucher amount claimed per transaction (HK\$)
Medical Practitioners	638,006	1 955 048	326	260	3,751–4,000
Chinese Medicine Practitioners	171,599	607 531	282	220	3,751–4,000
Dentists	105,455	119 305	884	575	3,751–4,000
Occupational Therapists	271	620	437	400	3,751–4,000
Physiotherapists	7,007	21 835	321	300	3,751–4,000
Medical Laboratory Technologists	9,905	9 748	1,016	1,166	3,751–4,000
Radiographers	3,197	5 886	543	340	3,751–4,000
Nurses	3,335	3 079	1,083	700	3,751–4,000
Chiropractors	1,913	5 003	382	250	3,751–4,000
Optometrists	128,399	72 572	1,769	1,650	3,751–4,000
University of Hong Kong – Shenzhen Hospital ⁽¹⁾	1,471	5 667	260	121	3,751–4,000

**Amount of vouchers claimed
and number of voucher claim transactions in 2017**

Type of healthcare services	Amount of vouchers claimed (HK\$'000)	Number of voucher claim transactions	Average amount of vouchers claimed per transaction (HK\$)	Median amount of vouchers claimed per transaction (HK\$)	Range of maximum voucher amount claimed per transaction (HK\$)
Medical Practitioners	774,088	2 218 938	349	280	3,751–4,000
Chinese Medicine Practitioners	256,563	860 927	298	230	3,751–4,000
Dentists	144,331	168 738	855	600	3,751–4,000
Occupational Therapists	2,506	2 217	1,130	400	3,751–4,000
Physiotherapists	8,344	25 076	333	300	3,751–4,000
Medical Laboratory Technologists	11,256	12 044	935	800	3,751–4,000
Radiographers	5,447	8 935	610	370	3,751–4,000
Nurses	5,122	5 079	1,008	655	3,751–4,000
Chiropractors	2,303	5 346	431	270	3,751–4,000
Optometrists	288,582	173 279	1,665	1,600	3,751–4,000
University of Hong Kong - Shenzhen Hospital ⁽¹⁾	1,855	6 755	275	118	3,251–3,500

Amount of vouchers claimed and number of voucher claim transactions in 2018					
Type of healthcare services	Amount of vouchers claimed (HK\$'000)	Number of voucher claim transactions	Average amount of vouchers claimed per transaction (HK\$)	Median amount of vouchers claimed per transaction (HK\$)	Range of maximum voucher amount claimed per transaction (HK\$)
Medical Practitioners	1,154,745	2 917 895	396	300	4,751-5,000
Chinese Medicine Practitioners	533,136	1 502 140	355	245	4,751-5,000
Dentists	287,044	294 950	973	640	4,751-5,000
Occupational Therapists	5,681	3 515	1,616	600	4,751-5,000
Physiotherapists	16,452	40 874	403	323	4,751-5,000
Medical Laboratory Technologists	17,808	18 662	954	780	4,751-5,000
Radiographers	13,400	16 785	798	460	4,751-5,000
Nurses	7,447	6 523	1,142	700	4,751-5,000
Chiropractors	5,225	10 743	486	400	4,751-5,000
Optometrists	759,750	359 343	2,114	1,951	4,751-5,000
University of Hong Kong - Shenzhen Hospital ⁽¹⁾	3,492	11 418	306	124	4,501-4,750

Note: (1) The University of Hong Kong – Shenzhen Hospital joined the Scheme on a hospital basis.

(4) With regards to the follow-up by DH and enforcement actions by relevant agencies, please provide the relevant figures in the table form below.

From 2016 to 2018, DH received a total of 220 complaints (including media reports and relevant reports) involving healthcare service providers participating in the Scheme. DH will conduct investigation for every complaint received, and if any violation of Scheme rules is found during DH's investigation, appropriate follow-up actions will be taken. The relevant statistics of complaints received from 2016 to 2018 are provided in the table below.

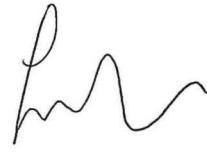
	2016	2017	2018	Total
Number of complaints (including media reports and relevant reports) received by DH involving healthcare service providers participating in the Scheme	33	67	120	220
Number of complaint cases requiring withholding of reimbursements or recovering paid reimbursements and the amount of vouchers involved ⁽¹⁾	5 HK\$562,170	5 HK\$15,454	1 HK\$2,250	11 HK\$579,874
Number of complaint cases referred to the Police by DH ^{(1) (2)}	5	6	5	16
Number of cases successfully prosecuted by the Police ⁽¹⁾	0	0	0	0

Note:

(1) Provisional figures as at end-December 2018. Some of the cases are still under investigation.

(2) Among the 16 complaint cases received in 2016 to 2018 and referred to the Police for follow-up action, investigation of 11 cases by the Police was completed and no follow-up was required, and five cases were still under investigation as at end-December 2018.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lilian TSE', with a stylized, cursive-like flow.

(Lilian TSE)
for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c. Director of Health
(Attn: Chief Executive Office (Health Care Voucher)
Senior Medical & Health Officer (Health Care Voucher)