

Official Response of the Hong Kong Breast Cancer Foundation to the Government's Revision on Current Breast Cancer Screening Recommendations

Today, the Government has informed the LegCo Panel on Health Services of its revised recommendations on breast screening, i.e. for women with certain risk factors and at moderate and average risk of breast cancer, who are now recommended to undertake mammography every two years.

The Hong Kong Breast Cancer Foundation (HKBCF) welcomes the revised recommendation and considers it a first step forward to addressing the worsening breast cancer situation in Hong Kong.

Over the years, the HKBCF has been advocating a three-phase implementation of population-wide breast screening:

- Firstly, provide screening for high risk women;
- Secondly, implement a pilot scheme for average risk women residing in districts with a lower uptake rate of breast screening, lower level of household income and high rate of advanced stage breast cancer;
- Thirdly, adopt a population-wide screening programme in the long term based on the experience of the first two phases.

Now that the Government has revised its recommendations, the HKBCF urges that a territory-wide breast cancer screening be implemented earliest possible.

The HKBCF would like to reiterate that for a breast screening programme to be successful, it should include the following elements:

1. Standard of hardware (machine) and software (standard of radiologist and radiographer conducting screening) should be on par with the criteria set out by the Hong Kong College of Radiology;
2. A dedicated organised screening programme should send out reminders to target individuals to remind them of undertaking breast screening every one or two years;
3. To ensure the quality of screening, results of radiologists participating in screening and output of breast screening centres should be audited;
4. Backup diagnostic service should be ready in case of any abnormal screening findings emerges.
5. Confirmed breast cancer patients should be given fast track for treatment;
6. To drive at public-private partnership to make it a successful breast screening programme launched by the Government.