

**For discussion on
21 October 2024**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Civil Service Eligible Persons Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Pilot Scheme

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the Civil Service Eligible Persons¹ Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Pilot Scheme (the Pilot Scheme).

BACKGROUND

2. The Government, as the employer, has an obligation to provide medical benefits for civil servants according to the conditions of service. The scope of civil service medical benefits is set out in Civil Service Regulations, Civil Service Bureau Circulars and Circular Memoranda. At present, about 570 000 individuals are eligible for civil service medical benefits.

3. The Government is committed to improving civil service medical benefits as far as practicable. Recent examples are the Integrated Care Programme² (ICP) and the Stable Drug Use³ (SDU) pilot programme launched by the families clinics in 2020, and the new Chinese medicine services for CSEPs commenced in the same year. So far three Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinics have been set up. Apart from the annual lump sum provision, the Government has provided dedicated funding to the Hospital Authority to enhance

¹ Civil Service Eligible Persons (CSEPs) consist of:

- (a) monthly paid civil servants and their eligible dependants;
- (b) retired civil servants living in Hong Kong and in receipt of a pension or an annual allowance and their eligible dependants living in Hong Kong;
- (c) eligible dependants of civil servants killed on duty and living in Hong Kong;
- (d) eligible dependants living in Hong Kong and in receipt of a pension under the Widows and Orphans Pension Scheme or the Surviving Spouses' and Children's Pension Scheme following the death of civil servants while in service or after retirement; and
- (e) other persons who are eligible for civil service medical benefits by way of their terms of appointment.

² The target of ICP is to improve the quality of care for patients in families clinics with diabetes mellitus. With the provision of appropriate care and health education, complications could be prevented or identified early for better control of the disease progression, so that the utilisation of specialist out-patient service, accident and emergency service and hospitalisation can be reduced. The number of patients under ICP was about 2 800 up till 2023.

³ The target of the SDU pilot programme is to serve patients in families clinics suffering from various chronic diseases (e.g. hypertension and hyperlipidaemia) with stable conditions to ensure that they take their drugs properly and safely. The number of patients under ICP was about 1 600 in 2023.

the provision of specialist out-patient services and diagnostic services to CSEPs since 2009-10 and 2011 respectively. Furthermore, to alleviate the situation where CSEPs have to wait a long time for dental services, the Government launched the Pilot Scheme on Dental Services (Dental Scaling) for CSEPs in July 2023 to arrange over 140 000 CSEPs to receive dental scaling services from private dental clinics. As of the end of September 2024, about 130 000 CSEPs have received or made appointments for dental scaling services under the scheme.

4. Seasonal influenza vaccination is one of the most effective means to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications. To encourage CSEPs to receive seasonal influenza vaccination early with a view to better protecting their health and reducing the risk of community and workplace transmission of influenza, the Chief Executive announced in the Supplement to the 2024 Policy Address that the Government would launch the Pilot Scheme in the fourth quarter of 2024 to provide free seasonal influenza vaccination services for about 30 000 CSEPs at families clinics.

KEY FEATURES OF THE PILOT SCHEME

Policy Objectives

5. Civil servants (especially frontline staff responsible for providing public services) get in touch with the public frequently. The Pilot Scheme can better safeguard the health of CSEPs and reduce the risk of community and workplace transmission of influenza. Maintaining a healthy civil service will reduce the impact on public services delivery due to illness in the civil service during the influenza peak season, and alleviate the burden on the public healthcare system.

Key Features of the Pilot Scheme

6. The Pilot Scheme will commence on 28 October 2024. Key features of the Pilot Scheme are as follows –

Targets	All CSEPs (Age: six months or above)
Type of vaccine	Inactivated influenza vaccine
Vaccination venues	The six families clinics operated by the Department of Health, which are located in Chai Wan, Wan Chai, Hung Hom, Tsuen Wan, Sai Kung and Fanling respectively
Fee	Free of charge
Vaccination quota	About 30 000

Vaccination Quota

7. We will offer about 30 000 vaccination quotas for appointment by CSEPs on a pilot basis. When estimating the number of vaccination quotas, we have taken into account the current age group distribution of CSEPs, the vaccination rates for seasonal influenza among different age groups in Hong Kong in recent years, the fact that some CSEPs are already beneficiaries of the Government's seasonal influenza vaccination services (e.g. pregnant women, individuals aged 50 and above, children aged 6 months to under 18, residents of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly, Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities and Residential Child Care Centres, etc.), and other factors such as the venue and staffing arrangement at families clinics. We will closely monitor the vaccination situation during the implementation of the Pilot Scheme. If the service demand is higher than expected, we will consider whether to increase the number of vaccination quotas.

Provision of Vaccination Services by Families Clinics

8. Having regard to the vaccination quota, geographical coverage of the families clinics, CSEPs' familiarity with families clinics, as well as the fact that the families clinics have been providing influenza vaccination to CSEPs of specific age groups⁴ who seek consultation thereat, the Pilot Scheme will utilise all six families clinics to provide influenza vaccination for CSEPs with appointment made. This arrangement can utilise well the resources, equipment and experience of the families clinics, and provide reasonable convenience to CSEPs.

Appointment Arrangement

9. CSEPs interested in participating in the Pilot Scheme should call the families clinics' appointment hotline (telephone number: 3950 9800) to make appointment through an automated telephone appointment system. The automated telephone appointment system will operate round-the-clock starting from 9am on 24 October 2024. CSEPs can select a families clinic in the system and make an appointment for vaccination time slot at the clinic in the next seven working days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays).

Vaccination Process

10. The staff at the families clinics will confirm the identities and appointment records of CSEPs who had made a reservation when they arrive at the families clinics. Prior to vaccination, medical staff will conduct health assessment to determine whether the CSEPs concerned are suitable for receiving

⁴ Families clinics have been providing influenza vaccination services to CSEPs aged 65 or above.

the influenza vaccination, and arrange vaccination for those who are confirmed to be suitable.

11. To encourage serving civil servants to participate in the Pilot Scheme, they will be allowed to visit the families clinics to receive the influenza vaccination during their duty hours. They should return to their work places as soon as possible after receiving the vaccination to minimise the impact on public services of the departments concerned caused by their absence.

Financial Arrangement

12. The Government will internally redeploy the existing provision allocated for medical and dental services for civil servants to cover the relevant expenditure of the Pilot Scheme. No additional funding is required.

Dissemination of Information

13. The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) will inform serving civil servants of the detailed arrangement of the Pilot Scheme through bureaux/departments, and will also seek the assistance of retirees' associations that have maintained regular contact with CSB to disseminate the information about the Pilot Scheme to their members. In addition, CSEPs can visit CSB's website for information about the Pilot Scheme.

WAY FORWARD

14. We will keep in view the service demand and implementation of the Pilot Scheme, and review the Pilot Scheme's effectiveness and way forward in a timely manner.

ADVICE SOUGHT

15. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
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