

The 2018/19 Government Vaccination Programme
and Vaccination Subsidy Scheme

Aim

1. This paper summarizes the arrangement of the seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) and pneumococcal vaccination under 2018/19 Government Vaccination Programme (GVP), including Residential Care Home Vaccination Programme (RVP), and Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (VSS). We encouraged members of District Councils (DC) to promote vaccination in the community.

Background

2. To lower the risk of serious complications and hospitalisation from seasonal influenza infection, the Government has been providing free and subsidised SIV to specified target groups annually under GVP and VSS.

3. In addition, free or subsidised 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (23vPPV) has been provided to eligible elderly persons under these programmes since 2009, to reduce their risk of getting invasive pneumococcal diseases.

4. Taking into consideration the updated recommendation by SCVPD on pneumococcal vaccine, the Government has started in 2017/18 to provide free or subsidised 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) for high-risk elderly, to enhance their immunity against pneumococcal infection.

5. With unyielding support from DC members and community partners in promoting the vaccination programmes/ schemes and organising outreach vaccination activities, more members of the public were facilitated to receive vaccination.

6. A total of nearly 820,000 doses of SIV were administered under GVP and VSS in 2017/18. It was an increase of about 17% (over 110,000 doses) compared with 2016/17. More than 190,000 doses of pneumococcal vaccines were also administered to elderly.

7. Continuous support from DC members in the upcoming season is crucial to promote health in the public and to raise SIV and pneumococcal vaccination

coverage.

Seasonal influenza vaccination in 2018/19

8. Seasonal influenza vaccination is one of the effective means to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications, as well as reduce influenza related hospitalisation and death.

9. Considering local epidemiology, the latest scientific evidence and overseas practices, the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) under Centre for Health Protection (CHP) continues to recommend the current priority groups to receive SIV.

10. To benefit more people, **Hong Kong residents aged 50 to 64 years will be newly added as an eligible group for subsidised influenza vaccination** under VSS. Please see **Annex 1** for the details.

11. Under VSS, eligible persons can receive subsidised influenza vaccination from private doctors who have enrolled in VSS. Subsidy level will be increased from HK\$190 to HK\$210 per dose of SIV. Two doses will be subsidised for eligible children below 9 years old who have never received seasonal influenza vaccination before.

12. To increase SIV uptake rate amongst school children, the Department of Health (DH) will launch the School Outreach Vaccination Pilot Programme and the Enhanced VSS Outreach Vaccination, to facilitate schools and private doctors to arrange outreach SIV vaccination at schools. The 2 programme/ scheme are summarized below:

- i. Under the School Outreach Vaccination Pilot Programme (Pilot Programme), the DH will arrange Government outreach team or public-private-partnership (PPP) outreach team to each participating school. The Government will purchase the vaccines and make arrangements to deliver the vaccines and collect clinical waste. The Government will pay an injection fee of HK\$70 per dose to the participating PPP doctors. DH has now arranged 184 schools to participate.

- ii. Under the Enhanced VSS Outreach Vaccination, primary schools which will not participate in the Pilot Programme, primary section of special schools, kindergartens and child care centres may invite participating doctors to provide free vaccination services for students at their schools. The Government will pay the doctor a higher subsidy of HK\$250 per dose of SIV and a new subsidy for clinical waste disposal (\$800 per vaccination session). The doctor cannot charge any fee from schools or parents. Schools will not need to go through tendering or quotation procedures for choosing doctors. The “List of Doctors Providing Enhanced Outreach Vaccination at School-setting” has been uploaded to the CHP website for schools’ reference.
13. Under GVP and RVP, eligible groups for free SIV will be the same as last year. Eligible groups can receive free influenza vaccination from clinics under the Hospital Authority (HA) and DH, designated institutions serving persons with intellectual disability, residential care homes for the elderly (RCHE) and residential care homes for the disabled (RCHD) as appropriate. Please find details in **Annex 2**.
14. The injection fee provided to visiting doctors under RVP will be increased from HK\$50 to HK\$70 for each dose of SIV.

Pneumococcal Vaccination in 2018/19

15. Invasive pneumococcal diseases (IPD) can occur in persons of any age but the outcomes for the diseases are usually more severe among elderly. In addition, dual vaccination of SIV and pneumococcal vaccination can lower the risk of hospitalization and mortality among the elderly.
16. In 2018/19, the Government will continue to provide free or subsidised pneumococcal vaccination to all eligible elderly aged 65 or above to enhance their immunity against pneumococcal infection. Please find the details in **Annex 3**.
17. Under VSS, eligible persons can receive subsidised pneumococcal vaccination from private doctors who have enrolled in VSS. The subsidy level of 23vPPV under VSS will be increased from \$190 per dose to \$250, and that of PCV13 will remained HK\$730 per dose.
18. Under GVP and RVP, elderly can receive free pneumococcal vaccination from

clinics under HA and DH, RCHE and RCHD as appropriate. The injection fee provided to visiting doctors under RVP will be increased from HK\$50 to HK\$70 for each dose of pneumococcal vaccination.

Start dates and vaccination period

19. DH has announced on 10 Aug 2018 in a press conference and in the press release that the start date for VSS will be 10 Oct 2018, and that for GVP (including RVP) will be on 24 Oct 2018.

20. The winter influenza season usually comes in the period from January to March/April. As it takes about 2 weeks after influenza vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body, members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated early (before January each year) to protect from infection during the peak of winter influenza season.

21. For pneumococcal vaccination for the elderly, there is no special vaccination period. Elderly who have not yet received vaccination should get vaccinated early. The vaccination programme/ scheme will be continuous throughout the year.

Arranging vaccinations under VSS

22. Enrolled doctors of VSS have to display the designated scheme logo and a pricing poster showing their charges near the entrance of their clinics. The list of enrolled doctors and their service fees (after deducting the Government's subsidy) will be uploaded to the eHealth System (Subsidies) (<https://apps.hcv.gov.hk/SDIR/EN>) around two weeks before the start date.

23. Members of the public can choose doctors or clinics from the above sources for arranging vaccinations. Members of the public may also contact the clinics beforehand to obtain more information about the service fee and other details and whether appointment is needed. Elderly persons can use their Elderly Health Care Voucher (HCV) for payments if the doctor has also joined the HCV Scheme.

24. In recent years, community groups organising vaccination activities at non-clinic setting for eligible persons under VSS have increased vaccination coverage.

However, vaccination is a medical procedure, community groups and health care providers must give due consideration to safety and liability issues when organising vaccination services in non-clinic settings.

25. Organisers are advised to read carefully the “Guideline for Organisers to Arrange Vaccination Activities at Non-clinic Settings” (**Annex 4**) before planning or organising vaccination in non-clinic setting. The Guidelines are available at CHP website: (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/46428.html>). The Guidelines provide details on the major steps to organise outreach vaccination activity under VSS, reference information on tendering service requirements, and contains the “Guideline for Temporary Storage of Clinical Waste Generated in Outreach Vaccination Activities” provided by the Environmental Protection Department. Vaccination Office staff may conduct site inspection to ensure the guidelines are being followed.

26. Doctors should also read carefully the “VSS Doctors' Guide 2018/19” on CHP website, especially the sections on proper vaccine storage and handling, cold chain management, infection control practices and disposal of clinical waste, to ensure safety and quality of outreach vaccination activities.

Preparation and publicity

27. DH has been in close communication with doctors, schools, and various stakeholders and has organised a series of briefing sessions, from March to September 2018, regarding the new initiatives of influenza vaccination for 2018/19, including the Pilot Programme, the Enhanced VSS Outreach Vaccination and increase of subsidy level, etc.

28. Since private doctors need to pre-order seasonal influenza vaccines from around June to July each year, DH has reminded them by email in May 2018 to alert them to estimate vaccine usage according to the new arrangement for 2018/19, and to place order.

29. DH has close liaison with working partners and stakeholders, including HA, the Social Welfare Department, the Education Bureau, school principals, teachers, institutions serving persons with intellectual disability, RCHE, RCHD, as well as the healthcare sector. Briefings have been organised for them to solicit their support to promote vaccination.

30. The vaccination programmes/ schemes will also be promoted through a series of publicity activities, including press release, Facebook, TV and radio APIs, media interviews, publicity/ health education materials, etc, to encourage target groups to receive influenza vaccination and/ or pneumococcal vaccination.

31. DH has set up a 24-hour Health Education Hotline (2833 0111) to provide more information about vaccines and vaccination programmes/ schemes, and have uploaded the information onto CHP website: (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/17980.html>). The Vaccination Office of DH operates a hotline (2125 2125) for public enquiry.

Department of Health
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