

Information document

The 2020/21 Vaccination Subsidy Scheme, Government Vaccination Programme,
Residential Care Home Vaccination Programme
and Seasonal Influenza Vaccination (SIV) School Outreach (Free-of-charge)

Aim

1. This paper summarizes the arrangement of the seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) and pneumococcal vaccination under various vaccination programmes/ scheme in 2020/21 for District Councils (DC)'s information.
2. In 2020/21, the Government continues to provide free or subsidised SIV and/ or pneumococcal vaccination to eligible persons through vaccination programmes/ scheme to enhance community's immunity against influenza and pneumococcal infection, reduce the risk of infection and related complications, and thereby reducing the burden on the healthcare system during times of COVID-19 pandemic.
3. The Government has increased the subsidy levels of vaccinations under the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme in order to encourage doctors reduce service fees and thus more people in the target group would receive vaccination.
4. District Councils (DC)'s continuous support is highly crucial, in particular, to encourage more persons of age 50 years or above in the community to receive SIV for protection against seasonal influenza in the peak winter influenza season.

Background

5. Seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) is one of the effective means to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications, reduce hospitalisation and death. The Government has been providing free or subsidised SIV to eligible groups annually.
6. Moreover, the outcomes of invasive pneumococcal diseases are usually more severe among elderly. One of the most effective means of preventing pneumococcal diseases is by pneumococcal vaccination. The Government has been providing free or subsidised 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (23vPPV) and 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) to eligible elderly.

7. In 2019/20, a total of above 1 390 000 doses of SIV were administered under Governments' various vaccination programmes/ scheme. It was an increase of about 17% (over 200 000 doses) compared with 2018/19. More than 100 000 doses of pneumococcal vaccines were also administered to elderly.

Various Vaccination Programmes/ Scheme

Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (VSS) – will be launched on 8 October 2020

8. Eligible groups for subsidised SIV have been expanded to cover recipients of standard rate of "100% disabled" or "requiring constant attendance" under Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme of the Social Welfare Department (SWD). All eligible persons can receive subsidised vaccination from private doctors enrolled in VSS. Subsidy levels have been increased to HK\$240 per dose of SIV, \$300 per dose of 23vPPV and HK\$760 per dose of PCV13. Doctors may impose extra charge but some doctors will not charge any fee. Please find the details in **Annex 1** and **Annex 3**.

Government Vaccination Programme (GVP) – will be launched on 22 October 2020

9. Eligible groups for free SIV have been expanded to cover recipients of standard rate of "100% disabled" or "requiring constant attendance" under CSSA Scheme of SWD. Eligible persons can receive SIV and/ or pneumococcal vaccination free of charge at clinics of Hospital Authority (HA) and Department of Health (DH). Please find details in **Annex 2** and **Annex 3**.

Residential Care Home Vaccination Programme (RVP) – will be launched on 22 October 2020

10. Eligible persons can receive free SIV and/ or pneumococcal vaccination at residential care homes for the elderly (RCHE), residential care homes for the disabled (RCHD), residential child care centres (RCCC) and designated institutions serving persons with intellectual disability. These homes/ institutions/ centres under RVP will arrange visiting medical officers to provide vaccination. The reimbursement to VMOs will remain at \$100 per dose. Please refer to **Annex 2** and **Annex 3** for details.

SIV School Outreach (Free-of-charge) - will be launched on 8 October 2020 for kindergartens (KG) and child care centers (CCC); and 22 October 2020 for primary

schools

11. To increase SIV uptake rate amongst school children, DH will implement the SIV School Outreach (Free-of-charge) programme for all primary schools, KGs and CCCs to join.
12. The Government will purchase vaccines for participating primary schools and will reimburse HK\$100 per dose to public-private-partnership (PPP) doctors. For KGs and CCCs, PPP doctors will purchase vaccines and the Government will reimburse HK\$270 per dose to PPP doctors.
13. Schools that will not join SIV School Outreach (Free-of-charge) can join VSS School Outreach (Extra-charge-allowed). Doctors may impose extra charge but some doctors will not charge any fee.

Vaccination Period

14. 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 as soon as possible for protection during the peak of winter influenza season.
15. It is necessary to receive SIV every year because the circulating seasonal influenza virus strains may change from time to time and the composition of vaccine is updated every year to enhance protection. The immunity built up after vaccination in the last season will decrease and may become too low to provide protection in the next season.
16. For pneumococcal vaccination, there is no special vaccination period. Elderly who have not yet received vaccination should get vaccinated early. The free/subsidised vaccination programmes/ scheme will continue throughout the year. The new subsidy levels will start from 8 October 2020.

Public to Receive Vaccinations in VSS Clinics

17. Eligible groups for subsidised SIV under VSS include Hong Kong residents of the following groups: persons of age 50 or above, children of age 6 months to less than 12 years (or primary school students), pregnant women, persons with

intellectual disability, persons receiving disability allowance and persons who are recipients of standard rate of “100% disabled” or “requiring constant attendance” under the CSSA of SWD. Eligible groups for subsidised pneumococcal vaccination under VSS include Hong Kong residents of age 65 or above. Please find the details in **Annex 1** and **Annex 3**.

18. Eligible persons can search the list of enrolled doctors and service fees (after deducting the Government's subsidy) from the eHealth System (Subsidies) website (<https://apps.hcv.gov.hk/Public/en/SPS/Search>) (to be updated on 24 Sep 2020). Eligible persons can choose doctors and clinics and contact them to arrange vaccination. Elderly persons can use Elderly Health Care Voucher (HCV) for payments if the doctor has also joined the HCV Scheme.

Public to Receive Vaccinations at Outreach Vaccination Activities

19. DC offices and other organisations in the community planning to organise outreach vaccination for eligible persons under VSS can first find the list of doctors providing outreach vaccination services at the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) website (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/46428.html>). The “Guideline on how to arrange Vaccination Activity at Non-clinic Settings” (**Annex 4**) in the website provides details on safety and quality issues, reference information on tendering/ quotation procedures, and “Guideline for Temporary Storage of Clinical Waste Generated in Outreach Vaccination Activities” provided by the Environmental Protection Department, which are suitable for use by organisers
20. CHP also prepared the “VSS Doctors' Guide 2020/21” for doctors’ reference on proper vaccine storage, cold chain management, infection control practices and disposal of clinical waste, to ensure safety and quality of outreach vaccination.
21. As vaccination is a medical procedure, organisers and health care providers are advised to follow the guidelines and give due consideration to safety and liability issues when organising outreach vaccination services in non-clinic settings.
22. During Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, social distancing measures implemented at that time should be observed. Please refer to the website of the Government (<https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html>) for details.

23. To prevent COVID-19, all participants should wear a mask and practice hand hygiene, keep appropriate distancing at waiting area, vaccination area, queue and other activities if any. Temperature checking for participants should be in place before entering the premises for vaccination. The venue for vaccination should be kept well ventilated.
24. To prevent COVID-19, the outreach vaccination venue should be cleaned and disinfected after every morning, afternoon or evening session of vaccination activity, with 1 in 99 diluted household bleach (mixing 1 part of household bleach containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), left for 15-30 minutes, and then rinsed with water and wiped dry. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol.

Publicity and Information

25. All along, DH has close liaison with working partners and stakeholders, including HA, Social Welfare Department, Education Bureau, school principals, teachers, institutions serving persons with intellectual disability, RCHE, RCHD, RCCC, as well as healthcare sector.
26. In 2020/21 season, publicity activities are conducted through multi-prong approach and focused more on persons aged 50 years or above. Announcement videos on SIV and on pneumococcal vaccination will be broadcast in TV and radio. Other publicity includes KOL video broadcast in clinics, advertisements in social media, etc.
27. DH has uploaded the information about vaccines and vaccination programmes/scheme onto CHP website: (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/17980.html>). The Programme Management and Vaccination Division of the Department of Health operates an enquiry line (2125 2125) for public enquiry.

Department of Health

Sep 2020