

Information document

**The 2023/24 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 summarises the arrangement of the seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) and pneumococcal vaccination (PV) under Government's various vaccination programmes/ scheme in 2023/24 season for District Councils' information.
2. SIV is one of the effective means in preventing influenza and its complications. All members of the public aged 6 months or above, except those with known contraindications, should receive SIV for personal protection.
3. The various vaccination programmes/ scheme in 2023/24 season will be launched from end-September onwards to provide free or subsidised SIV and/ or PV to eligible persons to enhance their immunity against influenza and pneumococcal infection, and to reduce the risk of infection and related complications.
4. District Councils and other institutions/ community groups can arrange outreach vaccination activities via the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme to provide subsidised SIV and/or PV to eligible persons.
5. District Councils (DC)'s continuous support is highly crucial, in particular, to encourage persons of age 50 years or above in the community to receive SIV.

Background

6. Seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) is one of the effective means to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications together with reduction in influenza-associated hospitalisation and death. Local influenza epidemiology showed that persons aged 50 years or above, irrespective of high-risk conditions, have a higher risk of influenza-related intensive care unit admission and death. Given that SIV can effectively prevent influenza and its complications, all members of the public, except those with known complications, should receive SIV every year for personal protection.

7. The outcomes of invasive pneumococcal diseases are usually more severe among elderly. Pneumococcal vaccination is one of the most effective means of preventing pneumococcal diseases. The Government has been providing free or subsidised 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (23vPPV) and 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) to eligible elderly. Pneumococcal vaccine can be given at the same time with SIV.
8. In 2022/23, a total of above 1 560 000 doses of SIV were administered under Governments' various vaccination programmes/ scheme. It is encouraging to note that a 25.3% increase in vaccine doses were given compared to last year. As for Pneumococcal vaccine, the coverage rate of elderly persons is around 42.3%. We appeal to District Councils and community groups to discuss with your partnering medical operator on the possibility of co-administration of SIV and pneumococcal vaccine to eligible elderly persons if feasible.

Various Vaccination Programmes/ Scheme in 2023/24

Vaccination Subsidy Scheme (VSS) – will be launched on 28 September 2023

9. Eligible groups for subsidised SIV include Hong Kong residents of the following groups: persons of age 50 or above, pregnant women, children of age 6 months to less than 18 years (or secondary school students), persons with intellectual disability, persons receiving disability allowance and recipients of standard rate of “100% disabled” or “requiring constant attendance” under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme. Eligible groups for subsidised pneumococcal vaccination include Hong Kong residents of age 65 or above. Please find details in **Annex 1** and **Annex 3**.
10. Eligible persons can search the list of enrolled doctors and information about extra charge from the eHealth System (Subsidies) website (<https://apps.hcv.gov.hk/Public/en/SPS/Search>) and contact the chosen doctors/clinics to arrange vaccination. Subsidy levels are HK\$260 per dose of SIV, HK\$400 per dose of 23vPPV and HK\$800 per dose of PCV13. Doctors may impose extra charge but some doctors will not charge any fee. Elderly persons can use Elderly Health Care Voucher (HCV) for payments if the doctor has also joined the HCV Scheme.

Government Vaccination Programme (GVP) – will be launched on 5 Oct 2023

11. Eligible groups remained the same as in 2022/23. Eligible persons can receive free SIV and/ or pneumococcal vaccination at designated 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 5 Oct 2023

12. 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 doctors to provide vaccination. The reimbursement to doctors will be HK\$105 per dose. Please refer to Annex 2 and Annex 3 for details.

SIV School Outreach (Free-of-charge) - will be launched on 5 Oct 2023 for kindergartens (KG) / child care centers (CCC), primary schools and secondary schools

13. To increase SIV uptake rate amongst school children, DH will continue to implement the SIV School Outreach (Free-of-charge) programme for all secondary schools, primary schools, KGs, KG-cum-CCC and CCCs. The vaccines will be provided by the DH and a subsidy will be provided to the doctors at HK\$105 per dose.
14. Schools that will not join SIV School Outreach (Free-of-charge) can join VSS School Outreach (Extra-charge-allowed). The subsidy is HK\$260 per dose. Doctors may impose extra charge but some doctors will not charge any fee.

Arrange Outreach Vaccination Activities through Vaccination Subsidy Scheme

15. DC offices and community organisations planning to organise outreach vaccination activities in their venues can select doctors from the list at the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) website (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/46428.html>), and study the “Guideline on how to arrange Vaccination Activity at Non-clinic Settings” (**Annex 4**) for helping organisers to arrange outreach vaccination activities.

16. CHP also prepared the “VSS Doctors' Guide 2023/24” (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/45838.html>) for doctors' reference on vaccination procedures, proper vaccine storage, cold chain management, infection control practices and disposal of clinical waste to ensure safety and quality of outreach vaccination.

Vaccination Period

17. As it takes about 2 weeks after influenza vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body to protect against influenza virus, members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as possible for protection during the influenza season.
18. 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.
19. 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.
20. COVID-19 vaccines can be co-administered with, or at any time before or after, seasonal influenza vaccine under informed consent. If clients wish to space out COVID-19 vaccine with SIV, an interval of 14 days is sufficient.

Publicity and Information

21. DH has been maintaining close liaison with working partners and stakeholders, including HA, Social Welfare Department, Education Bureau, schools, institutions serving persons with intellectual disability, RCHE, RCHD, RCCC, and healthcare sector.
22. Publicity activities are conducted through multi-pronged approach. Announcement videos on SIV and on pneumococcal vaccination will be broadcasted in TV and radio. Other publicity includes KOL video broadcast in clinics, advertisements in social media and public transport, etc.
23. DH has uploaded the information about 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

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