

Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme temporary special arrangement for expired subsidy for January to end soon

The Transport Department (TD) today (June 13) reminded members of the public that the interim special arrangement whereby members of the public may apply for late collection of their expired subsidy for January under the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme (the Scheme) will end on June 15. Any further late applications beyond June 15 will not be accepted. Commuters who have not collected their subsidy for January may apply for late collection on or before June 15 by calling the Scheme hotline (2969 5500).

"Having regard to the fact that the Scheme is still in its early stage of implementation, and to cater for those who may not have been able to claim the subsidy in the first three months, the Government introduced an interim special arrangement on May 16 whereby members of the public may apply, within one month from the day after the collection period, for late collection of their expired subsidy by calling the Scheme hotline. Upon confirmation of the application, the uncollected subsidy can be collected through various collection channels from the 16th day of the month following the date of the application and within a further three-month period thereafter," the TD spokesman said.

"The interim special arrangement can only be applied to uncollected subsidy for the months of January, February and March by the end of the respective three-month collection periods. Notwithstanding this, members of the public who have yet to collect their subsidy for the months of February and March are advised to collect the subsidy through the established collection channels as soon as possible before June 16 and July 16 respectively, and save making the call to the Scheme hotline to apply for late collection," the spokesman said.

The service hours of the Scheme hotline are from 9am to 9pm on Mondays to Fridays and from 9am to 6pm on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. Members of the public applying for the expired subsidy can press "1" and "0" after choosing the language on the Scheme hotline to be connected to the customer service representatives directly for the application. The respective periods for handling applications for claiming the uncollected subsidy for the months of February and March are as follows:

Subsidy for the month of	Collection Period (Three months)	Handling Period for applications for claiming the uncollected subsidy (One month)
February	March 16 to June 15	June 16 to July 15
March	April 16 to July 15	July 16 to August 15

Commuters may check their record of public transport expenses and subsidy amount through the website of the Scheme (www.ptfss.gov.hk), the Octopus App and the Scheme hotline. For enquires about the details of the Scheme, please browse through the Scheme website or call 1823.

Council meeting not to be held tomorrow

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

Under Rule 14(3) of the Rules of Procedure, the President of the Legislative Council has decided that the Council meeting originally scheduled for June 12 will not be held tomorrow (June 14). Announcement will be made once the President determines the time of the meeting.

Hong Kong Science Museum exhibition offers fascinating glimpse of winter sports

The Hong Kong Science Museum is holding a new exhibition entitled "Winter Games" from tomorrow (June 14) to October 16, offering visitors a glimpse of exciting winter sports and giving members of the public a taste what it feels like to be a winter sports athlete.

The opening ceremony of the exhibition was held today (June 13). Speaking at the ceremony, the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services, Ms Michelle Li, said that Finland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden have taken their remarkable creativity to another level entirely, exporting the thrills and chills of the Nordic winter sports to Hong Kong.

She added that the Hong Kong Science Museum will be home to a variety of interactive winter sports and games exhibits. Through the Museum's high-tech collaboration with its counterparts in the four collaborating Nordic countries, a "cooling experience" of the Nordic winter will be offered in subtropical Hong Kong.

She also expressed her gratitude to the four science centres from Finland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden involved in creating the exhibition, both to promote science and showcase how science is related to people's daily lives and sports.

The exhibition features 20 interactive exhibits which simulate various winter sports, allowing visitors to feel like they are experiencing real winter games. Examples include imitating a figure skater and attempting some challenging rotations; participating in an exciting biathlon to test your skiing speed and shooting accuracy; sitting on a bobsleigh and working with teammates to cross the finish line as quickly as possible; delivering a curling stone and helping it slide to the desired position; and learning different ice hockey shots so as to score in the most efficient way.

In addition to the interactive experiences, information on the history of each of the winter sports is presented along with the various competition formats and rules, as well as the scientific principles behind them.

Other officiating guests included the Consul-General of Finland in Hong Kong and Macao, Ms Johanna Karanko; the Chief Executive Officer of Heureka, the Finnish Science Centre, Dr Tapio Koivu; the Chairman of the Science Subcommittee of the Museum Advisory Committee, Professor Ching Pak-chung; and the Museum Director of the Hong Kong Science Museum, Ms Paulina Chan.

The exhibition is presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, organised by the Hong Kong Science Museum, and produced by four science centres, namely the Experimentarium in Denmark, Heureka in Finland, the Tekniska museet in Sweden and VilVite in Norway. It is supported by the Consulate General of Finland in Hong Kong and Macao and the Finnish Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong. For details, please visit the Science Museum's website at

hk.science.museum/ms/wg2019/eindex.html or call 2732 3232 for enquiries.

To ensure safety, visitors are advised to wear suitable clothes and shoes for playing simulated sports when visiting the exhibition.

The Hong Kong Science Museum is located at 2 Science Museum Road, Tsim Sha Tsui East.

Total number of reported drug abusers declines but youth drug abuse warrants attention

The Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) reviewed the local drug situation in the first quarter of 2019 at its quarterly meeting today (June 13). The total number of reported drug abusers declined compared to the same period in 2018. However, increased reported young drug abusers aged under 21 and increased cannabis abuse warrant continuous attention.

According to the latest figures of the Central Registry of Drug Abuse (CRDA), the total number of reported drug abusers in the first quarter of 2019 decreased by 17 per cent (from 2 447 to 2 033) as compared to the same period last year, while the number of reported drug abusers aged under 21 increased by 15 per cent (from 129 to 148). Over 60 per cent of drug abusers took drugs at their own homes or their friends' homes only.

The number of newly reported drug abusers decreased by 2 per cent (from 403 to 394). Half (50 per cent) were young adults aged between 21 and 35. The median history of drug abuse of newly reported abusers (i.e. the time for abusers to be reported to the CRDA by reporting agencies from their first drug abuse) was 4.8 years, compared with 4.7 years in 2018.

In the first quarter of 2019, the total number of reported psychotropic substance abusers (PSAs) increased by 7 per cent (from 1 135 to 1 209) compared to the same period in 2018. The total number of reported narcotic analgesic abusers declined by 33 per cent (from 1 565 to 1 056). Among the newly reported cases, the number of PSAs (at 345) was substantially higher than that of narcotic analgesic abusers (at 37).

Heroin remained the most common type of drug abused, with the number of reported abusers having decreased by 32 per cent (from 1 564 to 1 056) compared to the same period in 2018. Methamphetamine (commonly known as "Ice") continued to be the most common type of psychotropic substance abused, with the number of reported abusers having increased by 7 per cent (from 405 to 435). Triazolam/midazolam/zopiclone and cocaine followed, with the numbers of reported abusers having decreased by 1 per cent (from 289 to 285) and 7 per cent (from 263 to 245) respectively. Meanwhile, the number of reported cannabis abusers increased by 57 per cent (from 109 to 171).

For reported young drug abusers aged under 21, cannabis was the most common type of drug abused, followed by cocaine and "Ice". Compared to the same period last year, the number of reported cannabis abusers increased (from 38 to 67), while that of reported cocaine and "Ice" abusers decreased (for cocaine, from 74 to 66; for "Ice", from 23 to 19).

The ACAN Chairman, Dr Ben Cheung, said, "The total number of reported

drug abusers in the first quarter of 2019 declined, but the noticeable rise of cannabis abuse, particularly by youths aged under 21, calls for attention. Cannabis is a drug and is addictive. It can cause serious harm to mental health, and increase the risks of respiratory problems and cardiovascular diseases. ACAN and the Narcotics Division (ND) are strengthening relevant publicity and educational measures to assist members of the public, especially young people, to have a correct understanding of the harms of cannabis abuse. Persons coming across drug problems can seek help through the ND's 24-hour hotline 186 186 or instant messaging service 98 186 186."

The Commissioner for Narcotics, Ms Manda Chan, said, "With the legalisation of recreational cannabis in some overseas countries and regions, members of the public travelling to these places are reminded to pay careful attention to the domestic cannabis laws. Bringing into Hong Kong cannabis or any products (including food or drinks) that contain controlled cannabis compounds is a criminal offence.

"For the coming summer holidays, parents are encouraged to arrange healthy extra-curricular activities for their children. Through more communication with their children, parents are in a good position to provide them with guidance and assistance for handling problems and advise them to refrain from trying drugs under the influence of others."

The CRDA figures for the first quarter of 2019 are available on the ND's website (www.nd.gov.hk/en/index.htm).

DH to launch Health Promoting School Programme in coming academic year

The Department of Health (DH) will launch the two-year Health Promoting School (HPS) Programme in 30 primary and secondary schools in the 2019/20 school year, with the aim of fostering a self-sustaining and health-enhancing learning environment for students. Participating schools will be assisted to identify specific health priorities and develop school-based health promotion action plans by making reference to the health needs of their students and work towards the goal of building a healthy campus.

The Consultant Community Medicine (Family and Student Health Services) of the DH, Dr Thomas Chung, announced details of the programme at a press conference today (June 13). He said, "Health Promoting School is an idea promulgated by the World Health Organization (WHO), which aims to strengthen a school's capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working through a concerted effort of all its members and the community.

"Schools serve as an efficient health promotion platform to reach a

large number of people. An HPS allows students to acquire knowledge and skills for healthy living which bring life-long benefits. By sharing their learning experiences, students can also enhance the well-being of their families, thus benefiting more people in the community. Meanwhile, making school a healthy workplace can improve the physical and psychosocial health of staff members. Education and health are important and interrelated elements in one's growth. Research suggests that students' levels of physical activity and dietary habits have a strong association with academic achievement, in particular a higher level of physical activity has positive effects on skills in mathematics and reading."

Dr Chung added that according to the WHO's suggestions, the HPS framework covers six key factors, namely healthy school policies, a school's physical environment, a school's social environment, community links, action competencies for healthy living, and school health care and promotion services. Under the six key factors, the HPS Programme will focus on four areas – physical activity, healthy eating, mental health and social well-being.

The HPS Programme will be launched in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 school years. Based on the six key factors, the DH has developed a checklist for the participating schools to conduct regular self-assessments and review the schools' health promotion measures in a systematic manner. The self-assessments will help the schools set priorities according to their specific circumstances and students' health needs, and develop school-based strategies and action plans on health development.

The HPS team under the DH's Student Health Service will provide support for participating schools to help them attain their goal to build a healthy campus. Schools will be provided with an overall health status assessment of their students for reference and implementation recommendations will be made on the schools' HPS development in the key areas.

The team will also organise seminars and workshops to help the schools get a better understanding of the concept of HPS and implementation skills. Diversified platforms will be set up for sharing information and tools on HPS and providing professional advice by healthcare professionals.

Dr Chung said, "We hope to gain experience from the participation of the 30 schools and explore the feasibility of extending the HPS framework to the rest of Hong Kong to establish a healthy setting conducive to living, learning and working in school campuses."

At the press conference, Adjunct Associate Professor of the Chinese University of Hong Kong's Centre for Health Education and Health Promotion Dr Robin Cheung shared details of the centre's experience in promoting HPS in Hong Kong. He pointed out that evaluation results demonstrated that the implementation of HPS could improve students' health and promote quality school development.

The principals of two schools participating in the HPS Programme also

attended the press conference. Caritas St Joseph Secondary School principal Mr Tse Hung-sum said that schools should draw up school-based health promotion strategies based on the characteristics of their schools and needs of their students. He said he believed that through detailed planning and systematic implementation, students' health and the effectiveness of education could be enhanced.

Sharon Lutheran School principal Ms Yum Chuk-kiu said that in this rapidly evolving society, while actively promulgating education work, all stakeholders including students, parents and teachers should pay attention to their health for sustainable development. She said she looked forward to working closely with the DH and collaborating with stakeholders to build a health promoting campus so that the concept of whole-person health can take root in different aspects of school life.

The Government in May last year announced "Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) in Hong Kong" to reduce the burden of NCDs on society, in which the transformation of schools into HPSs was one of the new strategic directions. The Mental Health Review Report announced by the Food and Health Bureau in 2017 also recommended exploring the feasibility of adopting the HPS model in Hong Kong, with a view to building a more caring and supportive environment where school-aged children and adolescents can learn, grow and flourish.

To take forward the idea, the DH set up a Working Group on HPS in May last year to develop a model suitable for local schools by taking reference from local experience of launching healthy schools. The working group comprised representatives from the DH, the Education Bureau and the Chinese University of Hong Kong's Centre for Health Education and Health Promotion, as well as school principals and parents.

To learn more about the HPS Programme, please visit www.studenthealth.gov.hk/english/hps/hps.html.