

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, at a media session after attending a radio programme this morning (January 12):

Reporter: can you shed some light on how the Government to prevent the abuse of the Health Care Voucher? Would the Government consider providing subsidy to pregnant women so that they can receive subsidy on whooping cough vaccine?

Secretary for Food and Health: First of all, about the Elderly Health Care Voucher, we noticed that there is an increase in complaints about the use of the Elderly Health Care Voucher. Therefore, we have started a review on the use of Elderly Health Care Voucher, including its original intended objectives and whether there is any abuse. Also, we are taking into account the comments from service providers as well as consumers. We also take note of the local studies that look into whether the Elderly Health Care Voucher is used in a way that fits into its original intended objectives. We are looking into all these issues and comment, and hopefully come up with some measures to ensure that there is no abuse or the current situation can be improved. We have already started the review. Once we have confirmed (to introduce) some measures, we shall make announcement.

Secondly, about the whooping cough, the Centre for Health Protection Scientific Committee (on Vaccine Preventable Diseases) has come up with some recommendations about providing vaccine to pregnant women. The Government is now looking into these recommendations and sees how we can move forward with the recommendations.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

DSD to hold open days

The Drainage Services Department (DSD) will hold open days at Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works on January 19 and 20 (Saturday and Sunday).

In celebration of the 30th anniversary of the department, the theme this year is "30 Years of Groundwork, Embracing a New Age", featuring the DSD's 4Rs: review of the DSD's 30 years, river revitalisation, rehabilitation of ageing drains and sewers, and relocation of Shatin Sewage Treatment Works to caverns. Through exhibition panels, model display and guided tours, members of the public can have a better understanding of the department's development and effort over the years, as well as the work done on flood prevention,

sewage treatment, and combating and mitigating climate change.

The two-day event will also include stage performances, food trucks, game booths, a fun area for kids and a parent-child planting activity. Members of the public are welcome to join this wide range of entertaining and educational programmes.

Admission to these activities is free of charge. Free shuttle bus services will be provided at the following locations on the open days from 9.15am to 4pm at intervals of 10 to 15 minutes:

- * Pick-up/drop-off area near the MTR University Station Exit B bus terminus; and
- * Pick-up/drop-off area at Pai Tau Street near MTR Shatin Station Exit B.

Information on the open days is available at the DSD's website (www.dsd.gov.hk). For enquiries, please call the open day hotline at 3484 9346 during office hours.

Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates of medical wards in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rate of medical wards in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Sha Tin

Police advise motorists that special traffic arrangements will be implemented in Sha Tin to facilitate the race meeting today (January 12).

The arrangements will come into effect two hours before the start of the first race and will last until the crowds have dispersed after the race

meeting.

Appropriate traffic signs will be put up and police will be on hand to guide motorists.

The Police also appeal to people going to Sha Tin Racecourse for the race meeting and to Happy Valley Racecourse for cross betting to make maximum use of public transport.

Parking spaces at the two racecourses are available only to holders of appropriate permits issued by Hong Kong Jockey Club and any vehicles illegally parked will be towed away.

MD announcement

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

The Marine Department today (January 12) reminded masters, coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels navigating in Hong Kong waters to proceed at a safe speed and exercise extreme caution because restricted visibility of less than 2 nautical miles has been reported.

Appropriate sound signals shall be made when underway or at anchor. All vessels must comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collision at Sea.

Also, when radar is used without the benefit of adequate plotting facilities, the information obtained from the equipment is rather limited and should be construed accordingly.

Visibility reports are broadcast by the Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) on VHF channels 02, 12, 14, 63 and 67.

In the event of an accident, a report shall be made immediately to the VTC at Tel: 2233 7801.