

Arrangements for change in result reporting systems of HKDSE Category C Other Languages subjects announced

The Education Bureau (EDB) announced today (May 21) the arrangements for the change in result reporting systems of Category C Other Languages (OL) subjects with effect from the 2025 Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination. The results attaining specific examination grades/language proficiency levels of the OL subjects will continue to be accepted as meeting the entry requirements of relevant civil service grades.

According to the new arrangements for Category C OL subjects (French, German, Japanese, Korean and Spanish) announced by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) in 2022 for the 2025 HKDSE Examination and onwards, candidates should take the stipulated language examinations administered by the respective official organisations in Hong Kong. Their results obtained at the stipulated examination grades/language proficiency levels or above will be included in the HKDSE Examination Category C results and reported on the HKDSE certificates. For details, please refer to the HKEAA website

(www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/HKDSE/assessment/subject_information/category_c_subjects/).

In response to the change in the result reporting systems of the OL subjects, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) accepts, from the 2025 HKDSE Examination results release day (i.e. July 16) onwards, the specific examination grades/language proficiency levels attained in the OL examinations (Note) as meeting the requirements of "Level 2/Level 3 in one of the five subjects in the HKDSE Examination" for civil service non-degree grade appointment purpose. Regarding the OL results obtained in the 2024 HKDSE Examination or before, the existing acceptance arrangement will remain unchanged. For information about the recruitment of civil service jobs, please visit the CSB website (www.csb.gov.hk/english/recruit/7.html).

An EDB spokesman said the Government has long been offering the OL subjects as elective subjects at the senior secondary level to enable students to fully develop their potential and nurture a new generation with global vision and multilingual abilities, thereby further strengthening Hong Kong's distinctive advantage of having strong support from the motherland and maintaining close connections to the world.

Note:

Specific examination grades/language proficiency levels of HKDSE Category C OL subjects refer to:

- A2 or above (i.e. A2, B1, B2, C1 & C2 (highest)) in French/German/Spanish;
- N3 or above (i.e. N3, N2 & N1 (highest)) in Japanese; and
- TOPIK II Grade 3 or above (i.e. TOPIK II Grade 3, 4, 5 & 6 (highest))

in Korean.

LCQ12: Licensing Examination of Medical Council of Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Kingsley Wong and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, in the Legislative Council today (May 21):

Question:

There are views that the content of the Licensing Examination (LE) administered by the Medical Council of Hong Kong (MCHK) is too difficult and its syllabus far exceeds clinical needs, resulting in low pass rates. However, there are also views pointing out that despite its high level of difficulty, LE can ensure that passing candidates are capable of coping with the medical environment in Hong Kong. In addition, a member of the public has relayed to me that he had requested past LE examination papers and the relevant examination information from the Department of Health (DH), but DH pointed out that such information was in the possession of MCHK, which refused to disclose it. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has studied if the authorities have the power to access or require MCHK to submit and disclose information, including the examination papers and marking criteria of LE; whether DH has reviewed the LE examination papers and kept full records of the relevant examination materials; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) as there have been criticisms that the inclusion of a large number of questions on specialties and rare diseases in LE is a deliberate attempt to create difficulties for overseas candidates, how the authorities ensure that the difficulty of LE examination papers is at a reasonable level while respecting the professional autonomy of MCHK; whether the Director of Health or his/her representative, as an ex officio member of MCHK, has participated in the design of LE examination papers, including giving opinions on the scope and questions of the examination; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) as there are views that MCHK's non-disclosure of past LE examination papers undermines candidates' learning and makes it difficult for the community to fairly assess the difficulty of the examination papers, whether the authorities and MCHK will explore the disclosure or restricted disclosure of past LE examination papers; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) as there are views pointing out that the "Useful Resources" on MCHK's current website are too simplistic and the number of "Sample Questions" available is insufficient, whether it knows if MCHK will enhance its website and introduce measures to further facilitate overseas candidates in preparing for LE?

Reply:

President,

In response to the questions raised by the Hon Kingsley Wong, after consulting the Medical Council of Hong Kong (MCHK), the consolidated reply is set out below.

The registration and examination of healthcare professionals are matters pertaining to the professional standard and conduct of the sector. Their regulation is administered by the statutory boards or councils of the professions. The regulatory authorities must be accountable to the public when discharging their duties, ensuring Hong Kong's medical professional standard while protecting the health of citizens and safeguarding the overall interest of society. The Government's role is to ensure, through effective administrative arrangements, that the boards and councils of the respective professions perform their regulatory duties in accordance with their statutory functions and powers.

The MCHK is an independent statutory body established under the Medical Registration Ordinance (MRO) (Cap. 161) empowered to handle registration and disciplinary regulation of medical practitioners in Hong Kong. Section 7 of the MRO provides that the MCHK shall set a Licensing Examination (LE), the passing of which shows the achievement of a standard acceptable for registration as a medical practitioner. The conduct of LE by the MCHK aims to ensure that those who wish to register as medical practitioners in Hong Kong after having received medical training elsewhere have attained a professional standard comparable to that of the local medical graduates, thereby safeguarding the quality of healthcare services and public health. The MCHK will regularly review the contents of the LE, and provides information to enable non-locally trained doctors who intend to sit for the LE to understand the format and contents of the LE.

The LE consists of three parts: namely Part I Examination in Professional Knowledge, Part II Proficiency Test in Medical English and Part III Clinical Examination. The MCHK adopts a number of measures in organising the LE to ensure that its level and assessment standards are comparable to those of the medical examinations of the two universities in Hong Kong. Among them, the MCHK has set up different sub-committees responsible for matters related to the LE, including organising the LE, approving examination questions and maintaining a database of examination questions, considering and deciding on the eligibility of applicants to sit for the LE, and processing candidates' applications for review. To ensure representativeness, the sub-committees include representatives from public and private healthcare institutions, the medical schools and the Department of Health. In addition, the two medical schools in Hong Kong will appoint local and non-local medical

experts with profound knowledge in relevant disciplines as examiners for each part of the LE to ensure that the quality and level of the examination meet the requirements. These experts will also offer recommendations to further refine the examination contents and arrangements. For Part I Examination in Professional Knowledge, the questions are chosen from the database of examination questions at comparable level as the medical examination of the two medical schools, hence not suitable for publication.

To enhance the transparency of the LE and to increase candidates' understanding of the LE, the MCHK set up an information portal on the LE in October 2018 (leip.mchk.org.hk). Relevant information of the LE, such as examination formats, sample questions, list of suggested readings, videos of the Clinical Examination and general information about the LE, is available in the LE Information Portal for reference by the public and non-locally trained doctors who intend to seek registration as medical practitioners in Hong Kong. The MCHK reviews and enhances the online portal from time to time, including increasing the number of sample questions, to facilitate candidates in preparing for the LE.

LCQ6: Supporting freight and logistics sector

Following is a question by the Hon Frankie Yick and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Ms Mable Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 21):

Question:

There are views pointing out that although the United States ("US") has seen its ranking as Hong Kong's major important trading partner decline in recent years, the imposition of high tariffs on Hong Kong goods and the elimination of the duty-free de minimis treatment for small parcels continue to have a significant impact on Hong Kong's freight and logistics sector. Members of the sector have predicted that the US tariff trade war against China will lead to a sustained decline in Hong Kong's freight volumes and could trigger an immediate supply chain disruption crisis, and the measures taken under the five major strategies as indicated earlier on by the Secretary of Transport and Logistics will be difficult to see results in the short term. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it has assessed the specific impact of the tariff trade wars launched by US to date on Hong Kong's freight and logistics sector (including sea, land, and air transport);
- (2) in order to make up for the shortfall resulting from the loss of the US market and to consolidate Hong Kong's position as a regional logistics hub,

of the short-term measures taken by the authorities to assist the logistics sector in accelerating the development of new markets; and

(3) in response to cash flow problems faced by logistics companies due to shipment delays or cancellations caused by the tariff trade wars, of the support measures put in place by the Government, such as the consideration of providing low-interest loans to these companies to address their immediate needs?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong has long supported and upheld the multilateral trading system. The imposition of tariffs and other trade protectionist measures by certain countries not only disregards Hong Kong's status as a free port with zero tariffs, but also damages the global multilateral trading system. Such measures disrupt global supply chains, harming all parties involved including the implementing countries themselves.

As previously announced by the Chief Executive, in response to the relevant developments, the Government will strengthen its strategy in seven areas, including to fully seize the opportunities in our country, China's development, and actively integrate into the national development; to strengthen international exchanges and deepen regional ties and co-operation; to accelerate industrial transformation; to intensify efforts to develop technological innovation; to vigorously advance international financial co-operation; to proactively attract foreign companies and capital to establish in Hong Kong; and to provide various support to help Hong Kong enterprises.

Having consulted the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA), our reply to the Hon Frankie Yick's question is as follows:

(1) Hong Kong recorded a 3.2 per cent year-on-year increase in air cargo volume in the first quarter of 2024, reaching 1.16 million tonnes. Container throughput of our port also grew by 2.7 per cent year-on-year to approximately 3.4 million twenty-foot equivalent units. The observed growth in cargo volumes is believed to be attributable to shippers' urgency to ship goods ahead of the anticipated implementation of reciprocal tariffs. Recently, our country and the United States (US) have reached a provisional agreement to reduce bilateral tariffs for 90 days. It is expected that shippers will maximise shipments during this window. However, it is expected such volume growth is unlikely to be sustained. In fact, the negative impact of the reckless imposition of tariffs by the US on global trade will be far-reaching. The overall global trade volume is expected to fall, and the logistics industry will inevitably be affected.

(2) In light of the new international trade environment, we must make preparations to avoid and mitigate risks while seizing new opportunities arising from the changing landscape. To this end, the Transport and Logistics Bureau will closely monitor developments, maintain proactive engagement with

the trade, and lead Hong Kong's logistics sector to cope with challenges by adopting five major strategies.

Firstly, we will explore emerging markets including the Middle East and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), while continuing our collaboration with the Hong Kong Logistics Development Council (LOGSCOUNCIL) to promote Hong Kong's logistics advantages by conducting promotional visits to and exploring other markets along the "Belt and Road". Secondly, we will strengthen collaboration with ports located in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and establish a comprehensive "rail-sea-land-river" intermodal transport system, thereby developing new cargo sources. Thirdly, we are actively studying the exemption of the import and export licence requirements for certain products to attract more transshipment cargoes. Fourthly, we will deepen international port and shipping co-operation by pursuing digitalisation and green and smart transformation of our port to enhance Hong Kong's port competitiveness. Fifthly, we will further expand Hong Kong's maritime and aviation networks to diversify our markets and reduce reliance on the US market.

(3) The HKSAR Government has been assisting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in addressing challenges and maintaining competitiveness amid a complicated and ever-changing economic environment through various funding schemes and support measures. As regards alleviating cash flow pressure, the Government has kept on enhancing the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme (SFGS) so as to meet the financing needs of SMEs during the economic downturn. Borrowing enterprises under the SFGS (including enterprises in the logistics sector) are now allowed to apply for principal moratorium arrangement for up to 12 months (the application period will last until November 17, 2025), and the maximum loan guarantee periods of the 80% and 90% Guarantee Products be extended to ten years and eight years respectively. At the same time, the partial principal repayment options will be offered to new loans so as to provide more repayment flexibility.

The HKMA, together with the banking sector, introduced in April 2025 additional support measures to further assist SMEs in obtaining bank financing and in their upgrade and transformation. In addition, all the 18 participating banks in the Taskforce on SME Lending have reaffirmed their commitment to actively implementing the "9+5" SME support measures launched by the HKMA and the banking sector in 2024. Referencing the principles under the Pre-approved Principal Payment Holiday Scheme, the banking sector will continue offering flexible repayment arrangements and deferment of repayment period. The total amount of dedicated funds for SMEs set aside by these banks in their loan portfolio has increased from \$370 billion in October 2024 to more than \$390 billion at present.

As regards export credit insurance, further to the 2024 Policy Address initiative on increasing the maximum indemnity percentage of the Hong Kong Export Credit Insurance Corporation (ECIC) to 95 per cent, ECIC already launched three more support measures on April 10, 2025, including extending the free pre-shipment cover for holders of the Small Business Policy (SBP); offering a 50 per cent discount on pre-shipment risks to cover premiums for non-SBP holders; and aligning the premium rates for new markets with those

for traditional markets to assist exporters in tapping into the new markets. ECIC will also provide 20 additional free credit assessment service on the buyers in the Mainland, ASEAN and Middle East, collaborate with various financial institutions to provide financing support for e-commerce, and providing credit insurance for export services relating to multinational supply chain to support Hong Kong export trade.

Thank you, President.

LCQ5: Accelerating the implementation of railway projects

â€‹Following is a question by the Hon Michael Tien and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Ms Mable Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 21):

Question:

There are views that as the Government is currently making vigorous efforts to develop the Northern Metropolis, it should expedite the implementation of various railway projects, such as the "Hung Kong Railway" linking Hung Shui Kiu to Hong Kong Island and the new cross-harbour railway between the coastal areas of Tuen Mun and Hong Kong Island. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) as the Government has indicated earlier on that the co-ordination of railway projects by one single entity is conducive to maintaining cost-efficiency, and that splitting part of the railway project works into a public works project may not be able to help enhance the efficiency of such a project, but there are views that adopting the public-private-partnership (PPP) approach in taking forward the railway projects (e.g. handing over to the Government the infrastructure portion, which accounts for about 70 per cent of the overall works, while the MTR Corporation Limited will take charge of the remaining portion of the electrical and mechanical works, which accounts for about 30 per cent) may expedite the progress of such works, and the Government may also raise funds through bond issuance, and even if the debt-to-Gross Domestic Product (debt-to-GDP) ratio rises to 16 per cent in the future, Hong Kong's debt-to-GDP ratio will still rank around 160 among some 170 economies, whether the Government will proactively explore and implement the PPP option in this regard; and

(2) whether it will consider formulating a labour importation scheme specifically for the railway projects, under which Mainland workers who travel on a same-day-return basis and are not entitled to any local benefits will be imported and exempted from the restriction that their wages should not be less than the median monthly wages of local workers in comparable

positions, so as to reduce the cost of such projects; if so, of the timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Following the principles of "infrastructure-led" and "capacity-creating", the Government is pressing ahead with a series of major transport infrastructure projects in the Northern Metropolis (NM) to strengthen the connectivity among the various new development areas and with other districts, as well as to facilitate Hong Kong's better integration into the national development through the construction of cross-boundary infrastructure.

The Government is carrying out preliminary planning and study for the development of the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands (KYCAI) and related strategic railway. The proposed strategic railway is primarily intended to enhance the connectivity of the artificial islands with the NM and the western part of Shenzhen, and its alignment and programme will have to tie in with the planning of the artificial islands. After reviewing the priorities and overall strategy of the various land creation and infrastructure projects, the Government considers that the development pace of the KYCAI could be eased. Separately, relevant departments are conducting a planning and engineering study on the near-shore reclamation in Lung Kwu Tan and the re-planning of Tuen Mun West area, and the transport connectivity of the said area with other districts will be examined in the process.

In consultation with the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the Development Bureau and the Labour and Welfare Bureau, our reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Michael Tien is as follows:

(1) To ensure that the NM and other strategic infrastructure projects can proceed on schedule and benefit the economy and people's livelihood at an early juncture, the Government will leverage market resources in a more flexible manner and adopt more diverse development models. All along, the Government would formulate the most suitable implementation and financing arrangements of individual new railway project taking into account the distinct characteristics and specific circumstances of each project. Currently, railway projects are mainly implemented under the "Rail-plus-Property" model which has proven to be effective. The Government grants property development rights having regard to the funding gap of the project, while the railway company bears the commercial risks associated with the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the railway. Under this arrangement, the railway company would co-ordinate the works for the property development as well as those for the railway, which could enable synergy among the stations, depots and the property development, and also create incentive for the railway company to complete the railway project and thus enhance the value of the property development as early as possible. Where circumstances warrant, the Government does not preclude the possibility to provide financial support for new railway projects through or in combination with other means. In fact, there were railway projects being taken forward

using other approaches.

The current practice of having a single entity to implement a railway project ensures seamless co-ordination across all aspects of the project, from design to construction. This also helps ensure that the design of the works fully takes into consideration cost-effectiveness, meeting operational needs while keeping cost under control. Splitting part of the works of a railway project into public works of the Government might not be able to help enhance the efficiency of the works due to interfaces between the works, and would also increase the Government's fiscal burden. With projects related to the NM being rolled out progressively, as well as other infrastructure projects with socio-economic benefits, the Government will expand the scale of bond issuance correspondingly. Over the five years covered by the current Medium Range Forecast, the ratio of government debt to Gross Domestic Product is expected to rise from the current 9.5 per cent to 16.5 per cent, which remains to be a prudent and manageable level. The actual amount of bonds to be issued by the Government will take into consideration the prevailing fiscal position, market response and works progress. We will continue to adhere strictly to fiscal discipline and ensure the fiscal prudence of our overall bond issuance programmes and sustainability of our public finances.

The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) has been playing a pivotal role in driving Hong Kong's development. We are aware of public concerns about the possible pressure on the MTRCL's manpower and resource when taking forward multiple new railway projects simultaneously. The Government has reminded the MTRCL's management of the need to strategically plan its treasury management, and make financing arrangements through appropriate means such as bond issuance having regard to its liquidity needs, so as to support the corporation's operation and continuous development. At the same time, the MTRCL must strictly control the costs and compress the programmes of its railway projects in order to enhance the financial viability of the projects.

To enhance speed and efficiency in implementing railway projects, the Government will continue to optimise and streamline procedures through "dual innovation" in policy and technology, so as to save construction time and manpower. Subject to local circumstances and existing legal framework, the Government is also actively exploring ways to facilitate the use of Mainland's construction methods and capabilities in constructing cross-boundary railway projects. In addition, when taking forward independent new railways or transport infrastructure projects, the Government will consider introducing new entities in their implementation. This would not only help relieve the pressure on the MTRCL, but also enable new entities to introduce innovative technologies and bring in more diverse financing sources.

(2) The existing Labour Importation Scheme for Construction Sector (Construction Sector Scheme) allows principal contractors of eligible works contracts to apply for importation of labour. The requirements for importing labour under the Construction Sector Scheme are formulated by the Government in accordance with Hong Kong's labour policy. Principal contractors of railway projects may also apply for importation of labour under this scheme as needed.

In the case of cross-boundary railway projects, the adoption of Mainland construction teams would work better with the above-mentioned idea of leveraging the Mainland's construction methods and capabilities and achieve maximum effectiveness. Taking the subsea railway tunnel of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Rail Link at the Deep Bay as an example, it would be more efficient and cost-effective for the Shenzhen side to construct the tunnel by unidirectional tunneling method. The Government will seriously study the implementation of specific arrangements for employment of Mainland labour in cross-boundary railway projects in light of the projects' unique nature.

LCQ2: Regulation of private healthcare facilities

Following is a question by Professor the Hon Chan Wing-kwong and a reply by the Acting Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, in the Legislative Council today (May 21):

Question:

It has been reported that earlier on, a private healthcare facility (PHF) providing vaccination and health check-up services was suspected to have closed down, resulting in customers who have purchased prepaid services not being able to use such services, and no refund has been arranged for them. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the current number of private facilities providing healthcare-related services and, among them, the number of those which have obtained PHF licences;
- (2) of the number of complaints received by the Government in the past three years involving private facilities providing healthcare-related services, as well as the main contents of and the follow-up actions taken on such complaints; and
- (3) as it has been reported that the Government has set up an inter-departmental task force to follow up the aforesaid incident of suspected closure of a PHF, and the Chief Executive has also indicated that he would review the existing regulation of PHFs, of the specific details of the Government's work in respect of the review concerned, as well as the measures in place to step up regulation, so as to further protect the rights and interests of consumers?

Reply:

President,

Upon consultation with the Security Bureau (SB) and the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB), the Health Bureau provides a consolidated reply to the question raised by Professor the Hon Chan as follows:

Closure incident of a private healthcare facility (PHF)

The recent suspected sudden closure of a company providing medical-related services (including vaccination and health check-up services) has impacted many individuals who have purchased prepaid services. In response, the Government has set up an inter-departmental dedicated team on May 2, 2025, to ensure that relevant cases are handled as soon as possible and members of the public involved are provided with assistance. The inter-departmental dedicated team comprises representatives from the SB, the CEDB, the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department (Customs), the Hong Kong Police Force (Police), the Department of Health (DH) and the Consumer Council.

Customs and the Police have been carrying out investigations into the incident under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (Cap. 362) (TDO), and to find out if other criminal offences are involved. On May 7, Customs arrested a director and a company secretary of the company concerned. They allegedly wrongly accepted payments as their commercial practices in the course of selling services, which is suspected to be in contravention of the TDO. Law enforcement agencies will continue to arrange for those who have made a report to give statements, with a view to gathering evidence for taking appropriate enforcement actions. The Consumer Council will also continue its attempt to contact the company concerned in order to handle the complaints by means of conciliation.

To ensure that affected individuals could receive proper medical support, the DH has set up a designated telephone hotline, email and instant messenger channels for receiving enquiries from locals and non-locals for free, as well as providing health information, in particular vaccination-related advice, and assisting parents in arranging for their children to receive vaccinations under the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme at the Maternal and Child Health Centres. Eligible children (mainly Hong Kong residents) are entitled to free vaccinations while non-eligible children will need to pay standard fees. Enquirers can also ask for information on how to receive other vaccines. The Primary Healthcare Commission (PHC Commission) has already engaged with family doctors and healthcare facilities to ascertain that there is a stable supply of relevant vaccines in the private sector, and has reminded family doctors listed in the Primary Care Directory (PCD) to update their practice information. The PHC Commission also enhanced the search function of the PCD to facilitate citizens in seeking medical consultation. After learning that the company concerned had used the laboratory services of a private hospital, the DH also took the initiative to contact the private hospital and offered assistance in delivering these laboratory reports to relevant doctors so that relevant cases could be followed up. The DH has also reached out to registered professionals operating medical laboratories or radiological imaging services, inviting them to contact the DH for assistance if they are unable to deliver the reports to referring doctors from the company concerned.

This incident shows that the operation of PHFs involves aspects other than professional standards of medical services, including commercial practices. It is imperative for the Government to leverage on various legal tools in existence to safeguard public interests in a more effective and comprehensive manner.

Regarding the prepayment mode of consumption under this incident, currently various laws in Hong Kong protect consumers' rights and interests. Among others, the TDO covers goods and services, and prohibits traders from subjecting consumers to unfair trade practices. The Government has noted multiple suggestions from various sectors of the community on how to offer better protection to consumers on prepayment mode of consumption, including introducing a statutory cooling-off period and limiting the maximum period of prepayment contracts. The CEDB has commenced a study taking into account factors such as the economic environment, the operating situation of relevant industries, as well as complaint and enforcement statistics, with a view to conducting in-depth review on various recommendations, so as to formulate appropriate strategies as early as possible to strengthen the protection of consumers' rights and interests.

Regulation of PHFs

As for the regulation of medical services, the Government has enacted the Private Healthcare Facilities Ordinance (Cap. 633) (the Ordinance) in 2018 for regulating PHFs. The primary objective is to ensure that premises providing medical services shall comply with stipulated facility and safety standards, and oversee the quality and price transparency of medical services as appropriate. The Government has been progressively implementing the regulatory regime for various types of PHFs on a risk-based approach. Although the implementation progress has been affected by the COVID-19 epidemic, provisions pertaining to hospitals and day procedure centres (DPCs) under the Ordinance have already come into full force. As of April 30, 2025, there were a total of 14 licensed private hospitals and 259 licensed DPCs in Hong Kong.

Regarding clinics and small practice clinics (SPCs), the Health Bureau follows the scheduled plan to implement the regulation for PHFs in phases, and will submit the commencement notices to the Legislative Council (LegCo) today (May 21) for gazettal on Friday (May 23) and tabling at the LegCo Meeting next Wednesday (May 28) for negative vetting in order to commence the relevant provisions. Once the above provisions take effect, a licence will be required for operating a clinic, and licensees must at all times comply with the Ordinance, licence conditions and codes of practice issued by the Director of Health (DoH). For SPCs (i.e. clinics having not more than five registered medical practitioner(s) and/or registered dentist(s) that meet specific conditions under the Ordinance), operators must ask the DoH for a letter of exemption from obtaining a licence. To allow sufficient preparation time for the sector and tie in with the publicity arrangement, the DH will begin to accept applications from October 13, 2025. More accurate figures related to PHFs could then be collected, and at this stage the DH does not have the number of clinics and SPCs.

The Government also plans to further implement section 92 of the Ordinance after the clinic licences and letters of exemption for SPCs have come into force in order to enhance regulation, prohibiting the use of titles or descriptions by individual unlicensed premises which may mislead the public into believing that medical services are provided therein.

The Government has also established the Committee on Complaints against Private Healthcare Facilities under the Ordinance in 2020, which has received 93 complaints over the past three years. As of May 13, 2025, cases considered and concluded stood at 78 with another 15 being under investigation. The complaints mainly involved issues related to professional practices of healthcare professionals, staff performance and communication issues of the facility, as well as administrative procedures etc.

Thank you, President.