

DH to subsidise high-risk women for breast cancer screening services from June 10 (with photo/video)

The Department of Health (DH) today (May 29) announced that Phase II of the Breast Cancer Screening Pilot Programme (BCSPP) will be launched on June 10 to provide subsidised breast cancer screening services to female Hong Kong residents aged 35 to 74 who are at high risk of developing breast cancer. The goal is to enhance the recovery rate of breast cancer patients through early detection and treatment.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among females and the third leading cause of cancer deaths of females in Hong Kong. Over the past decade, the age-standardised incidence and age-standardised mortality rates of breast cancer have both increased. In 2022, there were 5 182 newly diagnosed invasive female breast cancer cases, accounting for 28.6 per cent of all new cancer cases in women in Hong Kong. In 2023, the disease led to 834 deaths among women, accounting for 13.1 per cent of female cancer deaths.

The Government attaches great importance to cancer prevention and control work. Based on the recommendations of the Cancer Expert Working Group on Cancer Prevention and Screening under the Cancer Coordinating Committee, the Government launched Phase I of the BCSPP as early as in 2021 and subsequently Phase II of the BCSPP will be launched in accordance with the risk-based approach of cancer prevention and control as set out in the "Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address".

Details of Phase II of BCSPP

Eligible persons are high-risk women aged 35 to 74 who are at high risk of developing breast cancer, i.e. carriers of certain gene mutation(s) or with a strong family history of breast cancer/ovarian cancer (see Annex 1). Participants must be holders of a Hong Kong Identity Card or Certificate of Exemption and have registered in the Electronic Health Record Sharing System (eHealth).

Phase II of the BCSPP provides services to the public through public-private partnership programmes in collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The three service providers are Hong Kong Breast Cancer Foundation, United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service, and Haven of Hope Christian Service.

Starting from tomorrow (May 30), eligible women may contact any one of the three NGO designated clinics (see Annex 2) to make an appointment for assessment and arrange for mammography (MMG) screening on or after June 10. Additional ultrasound MMG will be arranged for those who are confirmed to carry specific genetic mutations.

To encourage high-risk women to undergo screening, the Government provides a high level of subsidy for Phase II of the BCSPP. Service providers may only charge participants a co-payment of not more than \$225 for each mammogram or ultrasound breast examination. Currently, all of the service providers will not charge any co-payment from the service users.

Members of the public may visit the dedicated website (www.breastscreen.gov.hk) or call the DH hotline (3586 3088) to learn more about Phase II of the BCSPP. The hotline operates from 9am to 5pm from Monday to Friday (except public holidays).

Government's work in cancer prevention and control

Under Phase I of the BCSPP launched in 2021, three Woman Health Centres (WHCs), four Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) and 18 Elderly Health Centres (EHCs) of the DH provided biennial MMG screening for women aged 44 to 69 with certain risk factors.

In the two-year Phase I of the BCSPP (which ran from September 2021 to December 2023), a total of 27 807 women have received breast cancer risk assessment. Among them, 7 785 (about 28 per cent) underwent MMG screening on referral based on the risk assessment. Among the women with abnormal MMG results who had been referred to specialists for treatment, 409 cases were followed up in public hospitals, among which 68 (about 16.6 per cent) were confirmed to have breast cancer. The breast cancer detection rate per 1 000 MMG screenings was 8.7, which was comparable to the international standard of about five cases per 1 000 MMG screenings. Of the 68 breast cancer cases identified through MMG screening, 97 per cent were at stage II or below.

The breast cancer risk assessment and screening have been included as part of the services provided by the Woman Health Service and the Elderly Health Service in 2024. In 2024, 9 230 women aged 44 to 69 were assessed for breast cancer risk. Among them, 2 689 women (about 29 per cent) had undergone MMG screening based on the risk assessment. Among the women who received MMG screening, 321 (about 12 per cent) were referred to specialists for further investigation and treatment.

To utilise resources more effectively and expand the multidisciplinary primary healthcare service network, the DH's Woman Health Services provided at the WHCs and the designated MCHCs are being integrated into the district health network of the Primary Healthcare Commission (PHC Commission). During the transition period of service integration, those who have already paid their annual fee and are still within the service period will continue to receive relevant services from the DH. The PHC Commission will commence the integrated women's health services within this year in an orderly manner, whereby women's primary healthcare services will be provided through three service points named Women Wellness Satellites (WWS) to replace the Woman Health Services of the DH. Among them, the WWS (Hong Kong) located in Chai Wan will commence operation in June this year. Women aged 64 or below can receive screening services at the WWS, while those aged 65 to 69 will continue to receive services at the EHCs of the DH.

In addition, to further expand the services, the Hospital Authority's General Out-patient Clinics have been providing breast cancer risk assessment and screening services to eligible underprivileged women (including Comprehensive Social Security Assistance recipients or persons granted medical fee waivers) since March this year.

The DH encourages the public to adopt a healthy lifestyle, including avoiding tobacco and alcohol, eating a healthy diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and maintaining a healthy body weight, in order to minimise the risk of non-communicable diseases, including cancer. For more health information on cancer prevention, please visit the [website](#) of the Centre for Health Protection.

