

LCQ13: Facilitating measures for Hong Kong people vaccinated outside Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Starry Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (June 23):

Question:

Recently, the Government has provided different forms of travel convenience for members of the public who have completed a coronavirus disease 2019 vaccination course (vaccination), and the business sector has also actively introduced various forms of incentives to encourage members of the public to get vaccinated as soon as possible. However, quite a number of Hong Kong people who have returned to Hong Kong from the Mainland have relayed that as their records of having completed vaccination on the Mainland have yet to be recognised by the Hong Kong Government, they are treated differently from those Hong Kong people who have completed vaccination locally. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the up-to-date number of Hong Kong people who have returned to Hong Kong from the Mainland under the "Return2hk – Travel Scheme for Hong Kong Residents Returning from the Mainland or Macao without being subject to quarantine under the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C)" (and the respective percentages of the people among them who returned from various provinces), as well as the percentage of such number in the total number of Hong Kong people who returned from the Mainland in the same period; whether it knows, among such returnees, the number of those who have completed vaccination on the Mainland;

(2) as the Government indicated early this month that it was studying ways to further facilitate Hong Kong people to make use of their non-local vaccination records, of the progress of such a study; whether it will introduce measures so that Hong Kong people who have completed vaccination respectively on the Mainland and in Hong Kong are treated equally, including eligibility for participating in the reward programmes launched by the business sector to encourage Hong Kong people to get vaccinated; if so, of the details (including whether such measures can be rolled out before the deadlines for signing up for the various reward programmes); if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will add a new function to the mobile app "LeaveHomeSafe" of storing certified non-local vaccination records; if so, of the details and timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In consultation with the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau and the Innovation and Technology Bureau, my reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Starry Lee is as follows:

(1) Since the implementation of the Return2hk Scheme on November 23, 2020 till June 20, 2021, 185 546 passenger trips have been made by Hong Kong residents to return to Hong Kong from the Mainland or Macao under the Scheme without being subject to compulsory quarantine. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government does not have the statistical breakdown of the originating Mainland provinces of these Hong Kong residents, nor do we have the number of Hong Kong residents returning from the Mainland during that period without being exempted from compulsory quarantine. We also do not have the number of Hong Kong residents who have completed vaccination in the Mainland.

(2) and (3) Currently, under the "vaccine bubble" concept, in addition to the protection received, people who have completed the COVID-19 vaccination course would also be subject to more lenient requirements under the various social distancing measures. The Government has also adjusted the boarding, quarantine and testing arrangement for vaccinated persons arriving in Hong Kong.

For vaccines administered outside Hong Kong, apart from the COVID-19 vaccines already recognised for use in Hong Kong, vaccines on the World Health Organization (WHO) Emergency Use Listing or Pre-qualification lists, vaccines recognised for use by Stringent Regulatory Authorities as designated by the WHO or the National Medical Products Administration, as well as vaccines recommended by the Joint Scientific Committee (Note) joined by the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel are also accepted for the aforementioned arrangements. The Government has uploaded the list of relevant vaccines to the COVID-19 thematic website, and will update the list from time to time.

For those who have completed vaccination outside of Hong Kong with the relevant vaccines, currently they can present their vaccination records issued by relevant local authorities and complete a declaration form to meet the requirements under the "vaccine bubble".

We have been studying the inclusion of vaccination records of Hong Kong citizens who have received vaccination in the Mainland, by way of declaration, to digitally input the records into the Government's vaccination record database, and a QR code on the vaccination record will be provided. Upon confirmation of technical feasibility and implementation of the relevant arrangement, these citizens can store their QR code for vaccination records in the "LeaveHomeSafe" app on their mobile phones for display when necessary.

As for the various reward programmes implemented by the business

community, the eligibility and relevant details are determined by the relevant commercial organisations. The Government did not take part in these programmes.

Note: Namely the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases.