

LCQ21: Vaccination for visitors to Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Han-pan and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 12):

Question:

Various immigration control points have been closed one after another and various immigration quarantine measures have been put in place due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic. As such, the Immigration Department has, since February last year, exercised discretion to allow Mainland residents holding Exit-entry Permits for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao (commonly known as "Two-way Exit Permits") with an endorsement for visiting relatives to extend their limit of stay in Hong Kong, so that they can continue to take care of their family members in Hong Kong. Like other visitors to Hong Kong, such persons are ineligible for receiving COVID-19 vaccines provided by the Government. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether any Mainland residents who had been granted extension to stay in Hong Kong requested to receive COVID-19 vaccines in the past three months; if so, of the details;

(2) whether it has provided such persons with channels for receiving COVID-19 vaccines in Hong Kong; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) whether it will consider allowing visitors who have stayed in Hong Kong for a considerable period of time to receive COVID-19 vaccines in Hong Kong, so as to help prevent and control the epidemic; if so, of the details and implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In response to the various parts of the question raised by Hon Chan Han-pan, a consolidated reply from the Food and Health Bureau and the Civil Service Bureau, which are in charge of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme (the Vaccination Programme), is as follows:

Vaccination is the current focus of the global anti-epidemic work. The Government has implemented the Vaccination Programme in a phased manner in accordance with the priority for vaccination since February 26, 2021. As at May 10, about 1.77 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been administered to members of the public, with over 1.08 million people having received the

first dose of vaccine (accounting for about 16.6 per cent of the population aged 16 or above). The Government's goal is to provide vaccines for the majority of Hong Kong residents within 2021 through the Government-led Vaccination Programme. Members of the public can receive the vaccines on a voluntary basis free of charge. The Vaccination Programme has now been expanded to cover all Hong Kong residents aged 16 or above (the minimum age for receiving the BioNTech vaccine is 16 while that for receiving the Sinovac vaccine is 18).

Since the launch of the Vaccination Programme, we have received some enquiries on and requests for vaccination of non-Hong Kong residents. We are looking into the case and arrangement for providing vaccination to non-Hong Kong residents who have stayed in Hong Kong for a period of time, and would make and announce the decision at an appropriate time.