

SLW visits COVID-19 vaccination day in RCH

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, visited the COVID-19 vaccination day of an elderly home in Mong Kok this morning (January 5) to take a closer look at the implementation of the Assess and Vaccinate Programme for residents' early vaccination. The Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Ho Kai-ming, also joined the visit.

Accompanied by the elderly home operator, Dr Law first chatted with residents and healthcare workers. He then learnt more about the preparatory work prior to the vaccination day, including health assessments for unvaccinated residents conducted by the Visiting Medical Officer (VMO). Upon confirmation that the residents are suitable for receiving the Sinovac vaccine and their family members do not clearly oppose vaccination, VMOs will provide vaccination under residents' informed consent or that of their legal guardians. About 80 residents received vaccination in this round via the above programme. Together with residents vaccinated earlier, more than 70 per cent of residents in the elderly home have received vaccination.

Under the Assess and Vaccinate Programme, VMOs are arranged to carry out health assessments and vaccination at residential care homes (RCHs) for the elderly and persons with disabilities in various districts. The vaccination arrangements have been smooth so far and no residents have complained of feeling apparently unwell. Apart from outreach medical practitioners/VMOs arranged by RCHs, the Government will also arrange for health and medical organisations to provide health assessments and vaccination under the programme. From the implementation of the Assess and Vaccinate Programme on September 29, 2021, till January 2, 2022, about 5 300 residents had received the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine through the outreach services.

Dr Law stressed, "In the face of the more transmissible mutant strains, relying on younger citizens alone to get vaccinated in building an immune barrier within the household is no longer sufficient to protect our elderly. The elderly's vaccination therefore provides them with the highest, most prudent and most effective protection. This programme provides health consultation by doctors to residents and their families in need so that they can better understand the vaccine effectiveness to allay their concerns. We appeal to the management of RCHs for active participation in the programme to provide early vaccination and enhanced protection for residents. This will reduce their risk of getting seriously ill or death upon infection."