

Travel Agents Subsidy Scheme open for registration

To assist travel agents to tackle the financial difficulties arising from the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government has established the Travel Agents Subsidy Scheme under the Anti-epidemic Fund. Each eligible travel agent may receive a one-off subsidy of \$80,000. The scheme has been open for registration since the approval of the Anti-epidemic Fund by the Legislative Council Finance Committee on February 21. The deadline for registration is March 13.

The Government announced the establishment of the scheme on February 14, 2020. All travel agents holding a valid travel agent licence as at February 14 are eligible for registration. The registration form and guideline can be downloaded from the website of the Travel Agents Registry (TAR) (www.tar.gov.hk) or obtained from its office (Address: Room 4901, 49/F, Hopewell Centre, 183 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong).

The registration procedure is simple and convenient. Travel agents can submit the completed registration forms together with documentary proof of their bank account to the TAR by post or in person. They can also file the registration forms and supporting documents via fax or email but are required to submit the original registration forms afterwards.

The Government will verify the original registration forms upon receipt. Generally, once the supporting document is submitted, it is estimated that the disbursement of subsidies could be arranged in about 14 working days.

Special scheme introduced for delivering prescription medications to Hong Kong people in Guangdong and Fujian with urgent need for medications

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (February 24) introduced a special scheme to deliver prescription medications to Hong Kong residents who are currently located in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces with urgent need for medications.

A Government spokesman said that in accordance with the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation, all persons who have stayed in the Mainland for any period during the 14 days preceding arrival in Hong Kong will be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Given the compulsory quarantine measures, some Hong Kong people in Guangdong and Fujian Provinces will be unable to do day trips to Hong Kong to attend follow-up consultations to replenish their medications and return to the Mainland on the same day as they had done so previously. Although their family members may collect the prescription medications for them from clinics, they cannot deliver the drugs to the Mainland owing to legal restrictions at present.

To address the concern that the prescription medications taken by the aforementioned Hong Kong residents may soon be running out, the HKSAR Government has introduced the special scheme to deliver prescription medications to them. The special scheme is being implemented while the Regulation is in force.

The spokesman said, "The scheme is limited to the delivery of medications that are considered necessary and are prescribed by registered doctors for the Hong Kong residents concerned. Requests for delivery of other items (including over-the-counter medications and Chinese medicines) will not be entertained.

"To ensure that cases with urgent and insurmountable need for medications will be handled with priority, the scheme will first process cases in which prescription drugs will run out on or before March 31, 2020."

The spokesman added that the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions (FTU) already has offices and a well-established service network on the Mainland. The HKSAR Government has commissioned the FTU to provide services for this special scheme on a pro bono basis.

Through its Hong Kong and Mainland offices, the FTU will help Hong Kong residents who have appointments for follow-up consultations with the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Department of Health (DH) to collect prescription medications at HA or DH clinics, or to collect the prescribed medicines that are taken to the FTU by family members of the Hong Kong residents concerned from the clinics of the HA or the DH or private medical practitioners. After verification and reports to the government department concerned, the prescribed drugs will be couriered, at the cost of the HKSAR Government, to the Mainland offices of the FTU for onward couriating to the persons concerned.

The courier charges will be borne by the HKSAR Government and the FTU will not charge the service recipients or their families concerned any service fees under the scheme. The personal data collected will only be used for provision of the service under this scheme and will not be used for any other purposes.

Hong Kong residents who require the service may call the Social Welfare

Department's 24-hour Hotline (Tel: 2343 2255), or the hotline of the FTU Hong Kong office (Tel: 3652 5833) from 9am to 10pm daily for details.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Monday, February 24, 2020 is 107.6 (up 0.1 against last Saturday's index).

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Saturday, February 22, 2020 was 107.5 (down 0.2 against last Friday's index).

Temporary service relocation of Tsing Yi Maternal and Child Health Centre

The Department of Health today (February 24) announced the temporary service relocation of Tsing Yi (TY) Maternal and Child Health Centre (MCHC), located at 3/F of Cheung Hong Commercial Complex, Tsing Yi, to South Kwai Chung (SKC) MCHC and Tsuen Wan (TW) MCHC from March 2 until further notice.

The service relocation is due to renovation works at the Commercial Complex and subsequent improvement works at TY MCHC.

Child health services at TY MCHC will be relocated to SKC MCHC while antenatal services will be relocated to TW MCHC. Details are available on the following website:

www.fhs.gov.hk/english/centre_det/maternal/maternal_ntwd_ty.html.

Affected users with prior appointments will be informed of the relocation arrangements. The service resumption date of TY MCHC will be announced in due course.

Temporary service relocation of Tsing

Yi Cheung Hong General Out-patient Clinic

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Kowloon West Cluster (KWC) today (February 24) announced the temporary service relocation of Tsing Yi Cheung Hong General Out-patient Clinic (3/F, Cheung Hong Commercial Complex, Cheung Hong Estate, Tsing Yi) to Tsing Yi Town General Out-patient Clinic (21 Tsing Luk Street, Tsing Yi) from next Monday (March 2) due to renovation of the clinic. The service hours will remain unchanged (details are appended). The clinic's services are expected to resume at the original location upon completion of the renovation work, tentatively in the first quarter of 2021.

According to the spokesperson, patients with chronic illnesses requiring regular follow-up at Tsing Yi Cheung Hong General Out-patient Clinic have already been informed and arranged to attend follow-up appointments at the relocation site during the renovation period. Patients with episodic illnesses can make appointments via the telephone appointment system as usual and attend consultations according to their bookings.

"KWC has already informed the residents in the district on the service arrangements through various channels, including posters and banners. The respective District Council has also been informed. A reminder message will also be added to the telephone appointment system of Tsing Yi Cheung Hong General Out-patient Clinic," the spokesperson added.