

Re-appointments of members of Standing Committee on Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service

A Government spokesman announced today (December 19) that the Chief Executive has re-appointed Mr Alfred Chan Wing-kin, Mr Jat Sew-tong and Mr Dieter Yih as members of the Standing Committee on Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service (Judicial Committee). The three appointees will serve for a period of two years with effect from January 1, 2020.

The Judicial Committee is tasked to advise and make recommendations to the Chief Executive on matters concerning the salary and conditions of service of judges and judicial officers.

Other members of the Judicial Committee are Professor Wong Yuk-shan (Chairman), Mr T C Chan, Ms May Tan Siew-boi and Ms Melissa Wu.

2019 open call for funding applications for investigator-initiated research projects and health promotion projects begins

The Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF) administered by the Food and Health Bureau today (December 19) invited applications for investigator-initiated research projects and health promotion projects.

The HMRF aims to build research capacity and to encourage, facilitate and support health and medical research to inform health policies, improve population health, strengthen the health system, enhance healthcare practices, advance the standard and quality of care and promote clinical excellence, through the generation and application of evidence-based scientific knowledge derived from local research in health and medicine. It also provides funding support to evidence-based health promotion projects that help people adopt healthier lifestyles by enhancing awareness, changing adverse health behaviours or creating a conducive environment that supports good health practices.

The HMRF will consider applications in the following broad areas:

1. public health, human health and health services (e.g. primary care, non-

communicable diseases and Chinese medicine)

2. prevention, treatment and control of infectious diseases, in particular emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases;
3. advanced medical research in specific fields including paediatrics, neuroscience, clinical genetics and clinical trials; and
4. health promotion that facilitates mobilisation of local resources to promote good health and prevention of illness in the community.

Applications from locally based tertiary institutions, hospitals, medical schools, non-governmental organisations and other appropriate centres, units and services are invited. Collaboration with local or non-local organisations is encouraged. Higher priority for funding will be given to proposals addressing this year's thematic priorities, which are infectious diseases, primary healthcare and non-communicable diseases, mental health, cancer and implementation science.

The normal grant ceiling is \$1.5 million per project with a grant duration not exceeding three years. Each principal applicant is allowed to submit one application (either a new application or a resubmission of an application). The principal applicant should be based in a Hong Kong organisation throughout the project period and be employed by the administering institution at the time of submitting the application.

Applications will be subject to peer review. The vetting will take into account scientific merit, local relevance and translational potential/value of the proposals, capacity of the administering institutions, sustainability of health promotion projects, the track record of applicants, value for money of the proposals and research ethics, where applicable.

Completed electronic application forms should be submitted via the electronic Grant Management System (eGMS) (rfs.fhb.gov.hk/eGMS) on or before March 31, 2020 (6pm Hong Kong time). Briefing cum Grant Skills Training Workshops and eGMS training sessions, to be held in January and February 2020, are now open for registration.

Details of the thematic priorities, application-related materials and the workshops can be downloaded from rfs.fhb.gov.hk. Enquiries can be made by email to rfs@fhb.gov.hk.

[DH to extend coverage of Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme to Hong](#)

Kong residents aged 50 to 75

The Department of Health (DH) announced today (December 19) that the Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme (CRCSP), starting on January 1 next year, will further extend its coverage to Hong Kong residents aged 50 to 75, i.e. those born in the years 1944 to 1970.

Regularised by the DH in August last year, the CRCSP aims to heavily subsidise asymptomatic Hong Kong residents to undergo screening tests in three phases. The first and second phases cover people aged 61 to 75 and those aged 56 to 75 respectively, while the last phase will further extend the coverage to those aged 50 to 75.

Colorectal cancer is the most common cancer locally. In 2017, there were 5 635 newly diagnosed colorectal cancer cases, accounting for 17.0 per cent of all new cancer cases, or about one in six new cancer cases. According to the figures in 2018, colorectal cancer led to 2 314 deaths, accounting for 15.9 per cent of all cancer deaths, or about one in six cancer deaths. It is the second most common cause of cancer death in Hong Kong, coming only after lung cancer.

A spokesman for the DH said that the screening can identify those who have colorectal cancer before they present with symptoms, or individuals at increased risk of colorectal cancer and enable them to receive early treatment. Eligible persons are encouraged to join the CRCSP as soon as possible.

The spokesman also reminded those born in 1943 to seize the chance to enrol in the CRCSP on or before December 31 this year, or else they will lose the eligibility with their age exceeding the upper limit next year.

There is no quota for participants under the CRCSP and it is heavily subsidised by the Government. Details of the screening pathway and corresponding subsidies are as follows:

(1) Participants shall attend a medical consultation by an enrolled primary care doctor (PCD) to receive a Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) screening. A government subsidy of \$280 per consultation applies including the second consultation to follow up on a positive FIT test result.

(2) If the FIT result is positive, the participant will be referred to see an enrolled colonoscopy specialist to receive a colonoscopy examination subsidised by the Government so as to find out the cause of bleeding. Under the standard colonoscopy service package targeted at FIT-positive participants, the subsidy amount is \$8,500 if polyp removal is necessary, whereas the amount is \$7,800 if no polyp removal is needed. Colonoscopy specialists may charge a co-payment not exceeding \$1,000 when providing the standard colonoscopy examination service.

For FIT-negative participants, they should receive FIT re-screening every two years until they pass the age of 75 in order to maximise the Programme's capability to prevent colorectal cancer. They will receive reminders via SMS, email or postal mail when they are due for re-screening. The subsidised FIT re-screening services are provided in any enrolled PCD clinic.

To date, more than 770 PCDs have successfully enrolled in the CRCSP covering about 1 080 locations, and about 97 per cent of these locations will not charge any co-payment. In addition, more than 190 colonoscopy specialists have joined the CRCSP to provide colonoscopy examination services at about 450 service locations. If no polyp removal is necessary, about 90 per cent of these locations will not require additional charges. If polyp removal is needed, about 70 per cent of these locations will not require additional charges. Separately, more than 166 000 eligible persons had participated in the CRCSP with FIT issued.

On screening outcomes, as of September 27 this year, among those participants who had submitted FIT tubes with analysable results, about 19 500 persons (12.6 per cent) had positive results in the first round of screening. Among those FIT-positive participants who underwent colonoscopy examination services, about 11 900 persons (66.7 per cent) had colorectal adenomas and around 1 170 persons had colorectal cancer (6.6 per cent).

With colorectal adenoma removed in the course of a colonoscopy, these lesions are prevented from turning into cancer, which reinforces the importance of undergoing timely screening tests to identify people at increased risk of disease for early treatment.

A preliminary analysis of 755 colorectal cancer cases diagnosed under the CRCSP revealed that about 60 per cent of these cases belonged to earlier stages, thus having a more favourable prognosis.

The spokesman said, "Leading a healthy lifestyle and having well-organised screenings can help prevent colorectal cancer. The prognosis of colorectal cancer can be significantly improved if detected early with prompt treatment."

Eligible persons who wish to join the CRCSP are reminded to enrol in the Electronic Health Record Sharing System (eHRSS). Please refer to the eHRSS website at www.ehealth.gov.hk or call the Registration Office at 3467 6300 for details.

For more information on the CRCSP, please visit the DH's thematic website www.colonscreen.gov.hk. The DH also operates a dedicated hotline (3565 6288) to answer public enquiries related to the CRCSP during office hours.

Launch of new patent system in Hong Kong today

The Patents Registry of the Intellectual Property Department (IPD) has started accepting and examining filings under the new patent system launched today (December 19).

The new patent system essentially comprises an original grant patent (OGP) system which creates a direct route for seeking standard patent protection in Hong Kong with a maximum term of 20 years, as an alternative to the existing "re-registration" route. OGP applications are subject to substantive examination by the Registry for determining the patentability of the underlying inventions.

The Director of Intellectual Property, Mr David Wong, said, "The OGP system demonstrates the Government's commitment to bringing the local patent system on par with the mainstream patent practices of the international community. It will also facilitate the development of the innovation and technology sector in Hong Kong."

Another feature of the new patent system is enabling any short-term patent owner or third party having a legitimate interest in the validity of a patent to request the Registry to carry out substantive examination on the underlying invention. This new post-grant mechanism safeguards the integrity of the existing short-term patent system while maintaining its overall cost-effectiveness.

The use of certain misleading or confusing titles/descriptions relating to the qualification of patent practitioners is also prohibited in Hong Kong under the new patent system.

In tandem with the launch of the new patent system, a new electronic processing system starts operation today to underpin electronic patent searches and filings. Preferential fees are offered to electronic filings of all patent applications, which are some 28 per cent below the fees for paper filings.

Further information about the new patent system, including its detailed filing requirements, procedures and official fees, is available at the IPD's website

(www.ipd.gov.hk/eng/intellectual_property/patents/New_Patent_System.htm).

Red flag hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (December 19) that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at the beach.