

Service providers are encouraged to join Health Care Voucher Scheme

The Government is going to implement a Health Care Voucher Scheme (HCVS) on a pilot basis from 2009 to 2011 to partially subsidise elderly in using private primary care services.

A spokesman for the Department of Health (DH) today (December 17) said healthcare providers interested to participate in the scheme were required to enroll with the department in advance.

Enrolment of healthcare providers has commenced on September 30 this year and will be ongoing throughout the period, the spokesman said.

“In order that they can commence service on January 1 2009, healthcare providers are reminded to submit their completed applications including all required supporting documents on or before December 19,” he said.

Successful applicants would receive the confirmation letter, authentication token and a Scheme Logo upon the completion of enrolment, enabling them to start delivering service on January 1, 2009. They are required to display the designated logo at their workplaces for identification, he said.

Under HCVS, members of the public aged 70 or above and holding a valid Hong Kong Identity Card or a Valid Certificate of Exemption would be given annually five health care vouchers worth \$50 each to partially subsidise primary care services they purchase from the private sector.

The vouchers can be used for services provided by registered medical practitioners, registered Chinese medicine practitioners, dentists, chiropractors, registered nurses and enrolled nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, radiographers and medical laboratory technologists.

"HCVS will be operated on an electronic platform (the eHealth System). Elderly do not have to pre-register as the vouchers will be issued and used through this platform.

"The vouchers are valid throughout the three-year period. Unused vouchers may be retained for use in the following year or the last year of the scheme.

“There is no need to rush into claiming the vouchers in January 2009. Elders are encouraged to use the vouchers as necessary over the period of the scheme,” the spokesman said.

Further information on HCVS is available at the thematic website (www.hcv.gov.hk).

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