

Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme

Shared Use of Vouchers between Spouses and the Launch of Electronic Consent

(For Reference by Enrolled Healthcare Service Providers)



Highlights

Pairing Up eHealth (Subsidies) Accounts of Voucher Recipients in Spousal Relationship

- ❖ To facilitate elderly couples to make better use of Health Care Vouchers (Vouchers) for primary healthcare services, the Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme (EHVS) now allows **shared use of Vouchers** between two eligible^{Note 1} elderly persons in spousal relationship^{Note 2} upon their mutual consent and completion of procedures to pair up their Voucher accounts. Prior application is not required. Once their Voucher accounts are paired up through a one-time registration, either party can, upon exhaustion of his/her Voucher account balance, use the Voucher balance in his/her spouse's account.
- ❖ Healthcare service providers enrolled in the EHVS may, at the request of two Voucher Recipients in spousal relationship, pair up their eHealth (Subsidies) Accounts following the instructions of the system. Healthcare service providers or their authorised personnel can pair up the Voucher accounts of an elderly couple by asking them to **declare their spousal relationship** and **give their consent to share use of Vouchers** before they confirm their agreement by inserting their **Hong Kong Identity Cards (HKICs)** into the Smart ID Card Reader as instructed.

Note 1: Elderly person aged 65 or above who holds a valid HKIC or a Certificate of Exemption (CoE) issued by the Immigration Department.

Note 2: For the purpose of EHVS, two Voucher Recipients are in a spousal relationship if they are married under monogamous marriage to one another as recognised by the laws of Hong Kong. "Monogamous marriage" means a marriage which was —

(a) if it took place in Hong Kong —

- (i) celebrated or contracted in accordance with the provisions of the Marriage Ordinance (Chapter 181 of the laws of Hong Kong);
- (ii) a modern marriage validated by section 8 of the Marriage Reform Ordinance (Chapter 178 of the laws of Hong Kong) and registered under Part IV of that Ordinance; or

(b) if it took place outside Hong Kong, celebrated or contracted in accordance with the law in force at the time and in the place where the marriage was performed and recognised by such law as involving the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others.

Electronic Consent (eConsent)

- ❖ To make it more convenient for elderly persons to use Vouchers, the EHVS has introduced an **electronic means** for Voucher Recipients to give their consent to the use of Vouchers. Instead of signing the Consent of Voucher Recipient in paper form, elderly persons can confirm the amount of Vouchers agreed to be used by electronic means. The system will notify the concerned elderly person or his/her designated family member/carer by **SMS**^{Note 3} immediately upon receiving a Voucher claim.
- ❖ Instead of signing the Consent of Voucher Recipient in paper form as was the usual practice, the elderly persons should be assisted to insert their HKICs into the **Smart ID Card Reader** to give consent to using a specified amount of Vouchers unless the Smart ID Card Reader cannot be used (in circumstances where the elderly person holds a CoE, the chip embedded in his/her HKIC is damaged, etc. or his/her voucher usage has to be confirmed by his/her guardian).

Note 3: SMS, or short message service, is only available to Hong Kong mobile phone numbers. The mobile phone number can belong to the concerned elderly person, his/her family member or carer.



How to Pair up the eHealth (Subsidies) Accounts of Elderly Couples?

Making a Declaration in Person at the Practice of a Healthcare Service Provider

- ❖ Elderly couples are not required to apply in advance. When either of them needs to use their Vouchers, they only have to attend **the practice** of a healthcare service provider **together in person**^{Note 4} to pair up their eHealth (Subsidies) Accounts.
- ❖ Elderly couples shall **declare their spousal relationship** and give **consent to share** their remaining Voucher balance in their eHealth (Subsidies) Accounts. The healthcare service provider or its authorised personnel shall **verify the identity of the elderly persons**, show or read to them the information about the binding terms and conditions of spousal relationship declaration (including the liabilities/consequences), and ask them to confirm by inserting their respective HKICs into the Smart ID Card Reader.
- ❖ Elderly persons shall provide an SMS-enabled **Hong Kong mobile phone number** and choose the language of the SMS messages. If necessary, elderly persons can choose to provide the Hong Kong mobile phone number of their family member/carer instead.

Note 4: For mentally incapacitated elderly persons, it should be done by completing the “Consent of Sharing Health Care Vouchers between Voucher Recipients in Spousal Relationship”.

Consequences of Making False Declaration about Spousal Relationship

- ❖ The Department of Health (DH) will conduct regular/sampling checks in accordance with the monitoring mechanism. All suspected cases of false declaration about spousal relationship will be strictly dealt with and referred to the law enforcement agencies for investigation. Persons involved may be subject to criminal liability and imprisonment.

The “Consent of Sharing Health Care Vouchers between Voucher Recipients in Spousal Relationship”^{Note 5}

- ❖ If either party is unable to pair up their eHealth (Subsidies) Accounts at a healthcare service provider’s practice in person due to exceptional circumstances, he/she shall provide a duly completed and signed “Consent of Sharing Health Care Vouchers between Voucher Recipients in Spousal Relationship” (Shared Use Consent) (Shared Use Consent available for download at the EHVS website: www.hcv.gov.hk), attached with **a copy of the latest HKIC (or CoE, if applicable)** of his/her spouse.
- ❖ The healthcare service provider or its **authorised personnel** shall verify the identity of the elderly person and record the information declared in the Shared Use Consent on the eHealth System (Subsidies).
- ❖ The healthcare service provider shall **keep** proper record of the Shared Use Consent.
- ❖ The DH will conduct regular/sampling checks in accordance with the monitoring mechanism. All suspected cases of **false declaration about spousal relationship** will be strictly dealt with and referred to the law enforcement agencies for investigation. Persons involved may be subject to criminal liability and imprisonment.

Note 5: The Shared Use Consent is only applicable to cases in which either an elderly person or his/her spouse is unable to pair up their eHealth (Subsidies) Accounts at a healthcare service provider’s practice in person due to exceptional circumstances such as immobility or bedriddenness etc.

Ways to Claim Vouchers after the Launch of eConsent ^{Note 6}

- ❖ Once the eHealth (Subsidies) Accounts are paired up, **the remaining balance of Vouchers in each account will be displayed** on the eHealth System (Subsidies) for the convenience of healthcare service providers or their authorised personnel to make Voucher claims.
- ❖ Whenever the Vouchers of a spouse are used, the elderly person is required to **produce a copy of his/her spouse's latest HKIC (or CoE, if applicable)** to the healthcare service provider.
- ❖ After obtaining the verbal consent of the elderly person to the amount of Vouchers to be used, the healthcare service provider shall ask **the elderly person to insert his/her HKIC** into the Smart ID card reader for confirmation. If the Vouchers of his/her spouse are used, the healthcare service provider shall **verify** the information of the spouse by checking the copy of HKIC (or CoE, if applicable) (including inputting the symbol of the HKIC) provided by the elderly person.
- ❖ If the elderly person's Hong Kong mobile phone number has not been recorded on the eHealth System (Subsidies), the healthcare service provider shall ask the elderly person to provide an SMS-enabled **Hong Kong mobile phone number** and choose the language of the SMS messages.

Note 6: If the elderly person receiving the service is mentally incapacitated and has to be represented by a guardian, the voucher amount to be used shall continue to be confirmed with the Consent of Voucher Recipient in paper form.

Points to Note

1. Personnel **authorised** by healthcare service providers enrolled in the EHVS can proceed to pair up the eHealth (Subsidies) Accounts of two elderly persons after they declare their spousal relationship and give their consent to share use of Vouchers. Elderly persons are **not** required to produce supporting documents for their spousal relationship at the time of account pairing.
2. If the spousal relationship between two elderly persons changes after their accounts are paired up, they are **allowed to pair up their respective accounts with another eligible elderly person once within the same calendar year**.
3. The DH will conduct regular/sampling checks in accordance with the monitoring mechanism. Any suspected case of **false declaration about spousal relationship** will be referred to the law enforcement agencies for investigation. Persons involved may be subject to criminal liability.
4. Healthcare service providers will receive **an information sheet** setting out the binding terms and conditions of spousal relationship declaration (including the liabilities/consequences) for ease of explanation to elderly persons.



Scheme Hotline:
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Scheme Website:
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