

Community Care Fund to launch Second Phase Medical Assistance Programme (with photo)

The following is issued on behalf of the Community Care Fund Secretariat:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (January 12) announced that the Second Phase Programme of the Community Care Fund (CCF) Medical Assistance Programmes (the Second Phase Programme) will be launched on January 16. The programme will provide a subsidy for HA patients who marginally fall outside the Samaritan Fund (SF) safety net but face financial difficulties using the SF's subsidised drugs or the specified self-financed cancer drugs under the First Phase Programme of the CCF Medical Assistance Programmes (the First Phase Programme).

Target beneficiaries of the Second Phase Programme are HA patients whose contribution ratio on drug costs exceeds 20 per cent of their household annual disposable financial resources under the SF mechanism.

The Chairman of the Medical Sub-committee of the CCF and Chairman of HA, Mr Anthony Wu, chaired a press briefing on the programme today. He said, "We understand that some patients who marginally fail the SF means test and cannot receive any subsidy need to pay the full cost to use the drugs. There are some others who pass the SF means test but still have to bear a significant amount of the drug costs, causing a heavy burden on their finances.

"To alleviate patients' financial burden, the Second Phase Programme will relax the maximum patient contribution ratio from 30 per cent to 20 per cent, so that those who marginally fall outside the SF safety net may become eligible for financial assistance. It is expected that about a few hundred patients can benefit in the first year. The amount of subsidy to some patients could exceed \$100,000 depending on their financial position and costs of drug treatment," Mr Wu said.

"Moreover, patients who are receiving financial assistance from the SF or the First Phase Programme and whose contribution ratio on drug costs is between 20 per cent and 30 per cent may also receive additional financial assistance under the Second Phase Programme. According to the HA's records, more than 150 patients currently receiving subsidy can receive additional assistance."

In order to ensure these patients will not miss the chance of applying for additional

subsidy, the HA has issued letters to those patients on record to inform them of the implementation of the Second Phase Programme and invite them to contact medical social workers of respective hospitals to confirm their eligibility and submit applications.

The First Phase Programme was rolled out on August 1, 2011. The programme subsidises HA patients to use six specified self-financed cancer drugs which have not yet been brought into the SF safety net for seven specific cancer diseases. As at the end of 2011, the HA had approved more than 130 applications with subsidy amounting to around \$12 million. The average subsidy of each application is about \$90,000.

Patients in need can consult doctors or medical social workers for more details about application procedures. For details on the CCF Medical Assistance Programmes, please visit the CCF website (www.communitycarefund.hk) or the HA website (www.ha.org.hk).

Ends/Thursday, January 12, 2012

NNNN

