



**Rare Disease Hong Kong launches Medication Payment Instalment Plan  
Drastically reduces the financial barrier to big-ticket drugs by 95%  
– a key to timely treatment**

**(Hong Kong, 24 September 2020)** In recent years, biomedical technology has advanced in leaps and bounds. More and more innovative drugs with better curative results and fewer side effects have been brought to market, signifying good news for patients. However, due to the high cost of medications, those patients who cannot manage to make a single lump-sum payment may have no choice but to delay their treatment. Rare Disease Hong Kong (RDHK) is pleased to launch Hong Kong's first-ever "Medication Payment Instalment Plan", in partnership with a non-profit making community pharmacy – SafeMed Dispensary, an operating unit of The Hong Kong Pharmaceutical Care Foundation, which will handle the dispensing of medications. Given the option to pay for medications in small manageable instalments, these patients will be able to receive timely treatment.

The "Medication Payment Instalment Plan" is just like other instalment plans for consumer durables such as mobile phones and electrical appliances. Patients buying prescription drugs covered in this plan at SafeMed Dispensary can enjoy payment instalments with nominated credit cards.

"RDHK had seen patients having to delay their treatment due to cash flow issues before. In view of this, we proactively invited collaborations with credit card companies, pharmacies and pharmaceutical companies to set up this 'Medication Payment Instalment Plan'. Once the plan is up and running, it can be used to finance many medications, which will assist patients to start timely treatment," said Mr KP Tsang, Chairman of RDHK.

"Taking multiple sclerosis, a rare disease, as an example, the new medication only requires a patient to take a 10-day course of treatment each year for two years, and the therapeutic effects can last for years. This new treatment is around HKD320,300 per year. Even the middle-income class may find it difficult to spare a lump sum cash payment of \$320,000 within a short time for medication. But under the 'Medication Payment Instalment Plan', patients can pay with a credit card and spread the drug cost over 18 months, i.e. about \$17,794 per month. In this way, the financial threshold for initiating the treatment drops by 95%," added Mr Tsang.

"We are very pleased to be part of the 'Medication Payment Instalment Plan', and to join RDHK to work with Hong Kong healthcare stakeholders to open the door to innovative methods that can help financially capable patients to receive early treatment. We shall review our existing treatment portfolio and gradually arrange for more suitable medications to join this Plan so that more and more patients can benefit," stated Ms SC Chiang, Director of The Hong Kong Pharmaceutical Care Foundation.

Three medications have been selected as the starting point for the Plan: cladribine for the relapsed form of multiple sclerosis, nintedanib for idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and afatinib for late stage non-small cell lung cancer.

Mr Tsang, Chairman of RDHK, further stated, “We propose to extend the Plan and include more variety of medications, as well as making the Plan available at more dispensing points, so that more health care financing options can be provided to patients who are in need and are financially healthy. We hope that Hospital Authority pharmacies, private clinics and private hospitals can also offer the Medication Payment Instalment Plan. RDHK is in the process of inviting these institutions to explore launching the Payment Instalment Plan for other treatment costs such as surgery.”

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### **About Rare Disease Hong Kong**

Established in December 2014, Rare Disease Hong Kong (RDHK) is the first patients’ group in Hong Kong comprising cross-rare-disease patients and their families with the support of experts and academics in the field. RDHK aims to improve related policies and services, promote public education on rare diseases, and strengthen the community’s support for patients in order to ensure equal respect and protection for patients in terms of fundamental rights such as healthcare, social support, education and daily needs.

## Rare Disease Hong Kong Medication Payment Instalment Plan

Pharmacy partner:

SafeMed Dispensary, an operating unit of The Hong Kong Pharmaceutical Care Foundation

Nominated credit card:

- HSBC Visa or Mastercard
- Standard Chartered Bank Visa or Mastercard

Example of Medication Instalment Plan:

Indication	Relapsed form of multiple sclerosis
Treatment	Cladribine 10mg tablet
Route of administration	Oral
Frequency of administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once a day, one to two tablets each day</li> <li>• A maximum of 10 days treatment each year for two years</li> </ul>
Annual treatment cost (HKD)*	320,300
No. of installment (months)	18
Monthly cost under Medication Payment Instalment Plan (HKD)	17,794
Reduction rate of initial lump sum payment	95%
Patients' eligibility	Any patient with a prescription issued by a Hong Kong registered doctor

\*The treatment cost may vary due to a patient's condition.

Procedure to enjoy the Medication Payment Instalment Plan:



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