

Old Age Living Allowance FAQs

Medical Fee Waiver

59. How can the eligible Higher OALA recipients obtain free medical services?

Higher OALA recipients aged 75 or above are entitled to the waiver of medical charges at public clinics or hospitals (including the Accident & Emergency Department) in Hong Kong. When they visit public hospitals or clinics, they only need to inform the staff of public clinics or hospitals of their eligibility status of Higher OALA and present the identity document which they used to apply for the allowance (e.g. Hong Kong Identity Card or Certificate of Exemption, etc.). The staff of the public clinics or hospitals will confirm their eligibility through the on-line medical waiver eligibility checking system and arrange medical fee waiving for them. The waiver will cover fees and charges of inpatient service, accident and emergency service, specialist outpatient clinic, general outpatient clinic, day hospital, community service, injection and dressing services, and also the standard charge of drugs prescribed during consultation. If the recipient is unable to produce a valid identity document, staff of the hospitals or clinics may not be able to confirm his / her eligibility and the recipient will be required to pay the medical charges by himself / herself and no reimbursement to cover the medical charges paid will be made by SWD. Hence, the recipients should bring along the relevant identity document and show it to the relevant staff upon using public hospital and clinic services as

60. I am single Normal OALA recipient, aged 78 with total asset value exceeding \$163,000. If my total asset value runs down below the limit, will I also benefit from the free medical services?

In case of change in assets making the total asset value become lower than the prescribe limits under the Higher OALA, the Normal OALA recipient aged 75 or above can make a report to the social security field unit (SSFU) concerned and apply for Higher OALA. Upon receipt of the declarations, staff of the SSFU will verify the information provided by the recipient. The staff may, where necessary, ask the recipient for supplementary information. Upon the

completion of verification and approval, the eligibility of the recipient will be established and he / she can benefit from the free medical services.

- 61. I am a single Normal OALA recipient, aged 68. My total asset value has decreased from \$180,000 at the time when I applied for Normal OALA to \$120,000. I have reported the changes of my total asset value to the SWD. Can I be eligible for the medical waiver and Higher OALA?**

The age requirement for the medical waiver for standard fees and charges is 75 or above. As you have not met the age requirement, you will not be eligible for medical fee waiver even though the total value of your assets is below the prescribed limits for Higher OALA.

- 62. If the recipient has withdrawn the Higher OALA application or is no longer eligible for Higher OALA, does he/she continue to be eligible for medical fee waiver?**

If the recipient has withdrawn the Higher OALA application or is no longer eligible for Higher OALA, he / she is no longer eligible for medical fee waiver.

- 63. Recipients of Normal OALA, OAA and DA cannot benefit from the medical waiver for standard fees and charges as Higher OALA recipients. Why?**

This measure of provision of the medical fee waiver for public hospital and clinic services for older OALA recipients with more financial needs (i.e. Higher OALA recipients aged 75 or above) aims to alleviate the burden of medical expenses on elderly persons and their families.

Higher OALA, Normal OALA, OAA and DA under the Social Security Allowance Scheme have different objectives and eligibility criteria. While the asset limits for Higher OALA are more stringent than those for Normal OALA, a higher monthly allowance is provided to eligible elderly persons to supplement their living expenses. OAA and DA are designed to provide a monthly allowance to Hong Kong residents who are 70 years of age or above or who are severely disabled to meet their special needs arising from old age or severe disability respectively. Both the allowances are non-means-tested. Given the different objectives, the target recipients of these allowances are also not the same.

To ensure that no one will be denied adequate medical care due to lack of means, the Government has all along provided medical fee waiving for the public hospitals and clinics to the needy patients. Patients who have financial difficulties in paying medical expenses can apply for a medical fee waiver at the Medical Social Services Units of public hospitals and clinics or the Integrated Family Service Centres of SWD. For details about the medical fee waiver applications and the eligibility criteria, please visit the Hospital Authority's website (www.ha.org.hk).