

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (March 21), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 243 patients (125 male and 118 female, aged six months to 89 years) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of COVID-19. Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

There are 362 patients under isolation currently. So far, 101 patients who had COVID-19 confirmed or probable infections have been discharged upon recovery.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

Fatal traffic accident in Peak

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Peak this morning (March 21) in which a 54-year-old expatriate man died.

At about 8.52am, a medium goods vehicle (MGV) driven by a 56-year-old man was travelling along Peak Road towards Peak while a bicycle ridden by the 54-year-old man was travelling downhill along Peak Road. Upon reaching a bend near 77 Peak Road, the bike reportedly lost control and side-turned. The cyclist trapped under the MGV.

Sustaining serious head injuries, the man was certified dead at scene at 9.01am by the ambulancemen.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, Hong Kong Island is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3660 6814 or 3660 6848.

Hospital Authority announces incident concerning test of specimens collected at test centre

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (March 21) announced an incident concerning the test of specimens collected at a test centre:

The HA has established temporary test centres at the AsiaWorld-Expo and North Lantau Hospital yesterday (March 20). People arriving in Hong Kong with symptoms of upper respiratory symptoms will be sent to the centres for a viral test, and to wait for the laboratory results. Healthcare staff will arrange the transfer of patients with positive test results to public hospitals for isolation and treatment. As for those who have negative test results, they can return to their residence and continue their home quarantine for 14 days.

The HA laboratory at Queen Mary Hospital was responsible for testing seven specimens collected from the test centre at AsiaWorld Expo. The repeat test conducted in the early morning today found four specimens having different results from the preliminary results obtained last evening.

Two people who had returned directly to their registered residence tested positive for COVID-19 in the repeat test. The HA has immediately reported the cases to the Centre for Health Protection. The two patients have been transferred to hospitals for isolation treatment and are in stable condition now.

Meanwhile, the other two people who had been waiting for the results in the test centre at AsiaWorld-Expo were found to have negative test results for COVID-19 in the repeat test. They were informed of the results and have returned to their residence to continue their home quarantine for 14 days.

The laboratory concerned has preliminarily reviewed the workflow of the laboratory and believed that the four samples might have been swapped during the process. The infection risk of the cases concerned has been assessed and the laboratory test workflow has been reviewed to further enhance the integrity of the test reports.

The HA apologised for the inconvenience caused to the people concerned, while the laboratory test workflow and results disclosure arrangement will be reviewed and streamlined in due course. The HA also expressed gratitude to all staff members from the departments and backend support units in setting up the temporary test centres within a such a short time.

Foreign domestic helpers applying to extend limit of stay to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic

In response to the latest development of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government today (March 21) announced that applications from foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) to extend their limit of stay in Hong Kong as visitors will be flexibly considered.

The Government spokesman said, "In view of the special circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, which might affect the arrival and departure of FDHs from/to their place of origin, the Immigration Department (ImmD) will flexibly consider applications from FDHs to extend their stay in Hong Kong as visitors for the purpose of finding a new employer in Hong Kong if their existing contract is due to expire or is terminated on or before July 31, 2020. The FDH concerned may apply to ImmD for an extension of stay as a visitor for a maximum period of one month in Hong Kong, if he/she is unable to return to his/her place of origin due to the pandemic in his/her place of origin and/or international travel restrictions arising from the pandemic. ImmD will exercise discretion depending on individual case merits under the special circumstances arising from the pandemic."

"In addition, under the existing mechanism, an FDH on a renewed contract with the same employer, or due to start a new contract with a new employer upon the expiry of an existing contract may apply to ImmD for deferring home leave for no more than one year after the existing contract ends, subject to agreement of his/her employer or new employer. Owing to the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, an FDH may apply to ImmD for further extension of limit of stay if he/she is unable to return to his/her place of origin for home leave within his/her extended limit of stay. ImmD will, on individual case merits, exercise discretion to grant him/her an extension to further defer the home leave for not more than six months. Arrangements should be made for the FDH to return to his/her place of origin for vacation within the extended period, and to use his/her entry visa (with a validity in line with the extension of stay granted) upon his/her return to Hong Kong for completion of the contract," the Government spokesman continued.

For enquiries, please contact ImmD by calling the enquiry hotline at 2824 6111 or by email to enquiry@immd.gov.hk.

“Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for Property Management Sector” under “Anti-epidemic Fund” continues to disburse subsidies

To support the anti-epidemic work of the property management sector, the Government has set up the "Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for Property Management Sector" (ASPM) under the "Anti-epidemic Fund".

The application period for the ASPM started on February 24, and online application commenced on March 13. As of today (March 21), the Property Management Services Authority (PMSA), which has been commissioned to implement the ASPM, has received 761 applications, of which 50 applications have been approved, involving subsidies of \$1,230,000 and benefiting 82 building blocks. The relevant property management companies (PMCs) and owners' organisations (OOs) will receive notifications for disbursement of subsidies shortly. The list of properties for which applications have been approved will also be announced on the website of the PMSA (www.pmsahk.org.hk/en/aspm/subsidy_list.html).

The application deadline for the ASPM is April 15. Eligible PMCs and OOs are reminded to submit their applications to the PMSA in time. In general, the PMSA will notify the applicants of the results and disburse the subsidies in about three weeks after receiving the application forms and all necessary documents.

The ASPM aims to provide an "Anti-epidemic Cleansing Subsidy" to the PMCs or OOs in private residential and composite (i.e. commercial cum residential) buildings, and subsidise them to provide the "Anti-epidemic Hardship Allowance" to front-line property management workers (i.e. cleaning and security workers). For details on the ASPM, please contact the PMSA at 3696 1156 or 3696 1166, or visit the website of the PMSA (www.pmsahk.org.hk/en/index.html).