

Hong Kong's first cancer strategy promulgated

The Government today (July 26) promulgated the Hong Kong Cancer Strategy (Cancer Strategy) with a view to reducing the cancer burden of the local population and improving the quality of life and survivorship of cancer patients through setting work priorities and directions.

Speaking at a press conference, the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, said the Government is committed to stepping up the prevention and control of cancer. The Cancer Strategy is the first holistic plan for cancer prevention and control for Hong Kong. The goal is to reduce the hit rate of cancer, to provide effective and timely cancer screening and treatment to all in need, and to offer reassuring survivorship support services to survivors and their carers.

"The Cancer Strategy focuses on the policy and the work on cancer prevention and control, which is in line with the Government's commitment in developing primary healthcare. Through people-oriented measures, allocation of resources and collaboration with community partners, we seek to enhance cancer prevention and to reduce the agony and anxieties among those who are affected by cancer," she said.

Cancer is the top killer in Hong Kong. In 2018, cancer claimed over 14 000 lives (provisional figure), accounting for about one-third of the total deaths of the local population. In view of the overall rising trend in incidences of cancers and having regard to the World Health Organization's recommendations, international practices and local situations, the Cancer Coordinating Committee (the Committee) chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health, consolidated and enhanced a comprehensive strategy on cancer prevention and control.

The directions laid down in the Cancer Strategy include reducing risk factors leading to cancer and providing evidence-based screening; seeking early detection and diagnosis; offering timely and effective treatment; strengthening survivorship support to cancer survivors; providing palliative and end-of-life care; investing in technology; enhancing the collaboration among relevant bureaux, government departments, the Hospital Authority, community organisations and civil society; as well as enhancing surveillance and research capabilities. The goal is to better prevent and control various cancers through these directions.

Professor Chan said, "The promulgation of the Cancer Strategy is an important milestone in our united fight against cancer. It is neither the end nor the beginning. I would like to thank members of the Committee, a number of experts and professionals, various organisations and their representatives for their valuable insights and efforts. I hope the community would continue to support the implementation of the Cancer Strategy."

Phased outcomes in the seven aspects of the Cancer Strategy, namely cancer surveillance, prevention and screening, early detection and diagnosis, timely and effective treatment, technology and support, survivorship and palliative care as well as cancer research, are expected to be achieved by 2025. The details are set out in the Annex.

The Committee was established in 2001 comprising cancer experts and doctors from the public and private sectors, academics and public health professionals, to advise the formulation of strategies on cancer prevention and control, and steer the direction of work covering prevention and screening, treatment, surveillance and research.

The Cancer Strategy is available at Food and Health Bureau's website (www.fhb.gov.hk/en/press_and_publications/otherinfo/190700_hkcs/index.html).

Government receives report on Grade Structure Review for VLT and MLT Grades from Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service

A spokesperson for the Civil Service Bureau said that the Government received Report No. 61 of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service on the Grade Structure Review for the Veterinary Laboratory Technician (VLT) grade of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) grade of Department of Health (DH) today (July 26).

"In view of the serious recruitment and retention difficulties faced by the VLT grade, the Government has invited the Standing Commission to conduct a grade structure review for the grade as well as the MLT grade which has similar job nature, grade structure and qualification requirements as those of the VLT grade. The Government is very thankful to the Standing Commission for the time and effort it has dedicated to this review," the spokesperson said.

"The Government will examine the review findings and recommendations, and consult relevant stakeholders including the departmental management of AFCD and DH, as well as the staff side of the grades concerned," the spokesperson continued.

"Upon receipt of the views of the stakeholders concerned, the Government will submit its recommendations on the way forward to the Chief Executive-in-Council for a final decision. The approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council will be sought should there be any change to the pay and grade structure of the abovementioned two grades," the spokesperson added.

The Standing Commission advises and makes recommendations to the Government on the principles and practices governing pay, conditions of service and salary structure of non-directorate civil service (excluding judicial officers and disciplined services staff).

HAD to open temporary night heat shelters

The Home Affairs Department will open 18 temporary night heat shelters tonight (July 26) for people in need of the service.

The shelters will be open from 10.30pm until 8am tomorrow.

For further information, please call the department's hotline before midnight on 2835 1473.

The 18 night heat shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Districts:

Central and Western –

Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall

3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex

2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern –

Causeway Bay Community Centre

3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –

Lei Tung Community Hall

Lei Tung Estate, Ap Lei Chau

Wan Chai –

Wan Chai Activities Centre

LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –
Hung Hom Community Hall
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –
Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po –
Shek Kip Mei Community Hall
G/F, Block 42, Shek Kip Mei Estate
Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –
Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –
Henry G. Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories Districts:

Islands –
Tung Chung Community Hall
G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building,
39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –
Kwai Shing Community Hall
Podium, Block 6, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Chung

North –
Cheung Wah Community Hall
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –
Hang Hau Community Hall
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex,
38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –
Lung Hang Estate Community Centre
Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po –
Tai Po Community Centre

2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –
Lei Muk Shue Community Hall
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –
Butterfly Bay Community Centre
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –
Tin Yiu Community Centre
Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai

The temporary night heat shelters will resume their functions as either community centres or community halls in the daytime for hire by the local community and cannot continue to be open as heat shelters. People may choose to take refuge from the heat during the daytime in the common areas in any of the 20 designated community centres or community halls. Their opening hours are from 9am to 10pm. For addresses of the community centres or community halls, please browse the following webpage:

www.had.gov.hk/file_manager/en/documents/public_services/emergency_services/List_CH_CC_Day_E.pdf.

Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service Report No. 61: Grade Structure Review for VLT and MLT Grades

The following is issued on behalf of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service:

The Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service today (July 26) submitted its report on the Grade Structure Review (GSR) for the Veterinary Laboratory Technician (VLT) and Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) grades to the Chief Executive.

At the invitation of the Secretary for the Civil Service, the Standing Commission carried out a GSR for the VLT grade in the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the MLT grade in the Department of Health (DH). The report sets out the Standing Commission's findings and recommendations.

"We conducted the GSR through a combination of fact-finding exercise and

engagement of the stakeholders. We invited and examined written submissions from the two departmental managements, staff bodies and the staff concerned and conducted an in-depth analysis of the change in scope and complexity of duties of the two grades over time and their respective manpower situations. We also visited the laboratory facilities of the two departments and met the departmental managements, the staff associations and staff concerned," the Chairman of the Standing Commission, Dr Pang Yiu-kai, said.

Having examined the manpower statistics of the two grades, the Standing Commission is of the view that the VLT grade has been facing persistent and serious recruitment and retention difficulties, while the MLT grade, which has identical entry requirements as the VLT grade, has been experiencing slight turnover problems. The GSR has focused on adjusting the entry requirements, qualification grouping, pay scales and structures of the two grades to help resolve these problems.

"We recommend re-classifying the two grades from Qualification Group 3 Group II: Diploma Grades to Qualification Group 3 Group I: Higher Diploma or Associate Degree Grades and raising the entry requirement from Diploma level to Higher Diploma level to reflect the minimum level of qualification required for competent performance of the jobs, as well as to bring the qualification grouping of the two grades in line with that of the other Supplementary Medical Professions grades," Dr Pang said.

The Standing Commission also recommends merging the two ranks of VLT II and VLT I to form a new entry rank of Associate Veterinary Technologist and merging the two ranks of MLT II and MLT I to form a new entry rank of Associate Medical Technologist.

"The pay scales of the entry ranks of the two grades after the proposed mergers will be improved from Master Pay Scale (MPS) Points 8-21 to MPS Points 14-24. This should help enhance the attractiveness of the two grades to potential candidates and alleviate recruitment difficulties. It should also help boost the morale of existing staff and help retain them," Dr Pang said.

The Standing Commission recommends raising the maximum pay of the Veterinary Technologist rank of the VLT grade and the Medical Technologist rank of the MLT grade by one pay point. The adjustment is to recognise the increase in responsibility and the higher level of expertise required of these ranks.

Having regard to the functional need of the VLT grade, the Standing Commission further recommends the creation of a new promotion rank of Senior Veterinary Technologist, which will also improve the career path and hence the attractiveness of the grade. The rank of Senior Medical Technologist already exists for the MLT grade.

"We trust that our recommendations, if accepted and implemented, will help improve the manpower situation of the two grades. This should in turn enhance the delivery of services to the public," Dr Pang supplemented.

"We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the departmental managements of the AFCD and the DH, the staff associations and staff members concerned for their support during the review," Dr Pang said.

Standing Commission Report No. 61 can be viewed on the website of the Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service at www.jsscs.gov.hk/reports/en/61/61.pdf.

The Standing Commission advises the Chief Executive on the structure, salaries and conditions of service of the non-directorate civilian grades in the civil service. The Standing Commission is chaired by Dr Pang Yiu-kai. Its members are Mrs Edith Chan Ngan Man-ling, Mr Chan Tze-ching, Ms Christina Maisenne Lee, Mr Lee Luen-fai, Mr Lee Ming-kwai, Ms Angela Lee Wai-yin, Ms Elaine Lo Yuen-man, Dr Miranda Lou Lai-wah, Mr Joseph Luc Ngai and Mr Tony Tse Wai-chuen.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (July 26) released the latest grading of water quality for 38 gazetted beaches that are open for swimming and one non-gazetted beach (i.e. Discovery Bay*).

Fifteen beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 18 as Fair (Grade 2) and six as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach	Repulse Bay Beach
Chung Hom Kok Beach	St Stephen's Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach	Stanley Main Beach
Discovery Bay	Tong Fuk Beach
Hap Mun Bay Beach	Trio Beach
Hung Shing Yeh Beach	Turtle Cove Beach
Kiu Tsui Beach	Upper Cheung Sha Beach
Lo So Shing Beach	

Grade 2 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach	Lido Beach
Butterfly Beach	Lower Cheung Sha Beach
Cafeteria New Beach	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach

Castle Peak Beach	Middle Bay Beach
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Pui O Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach	Shek O Beach
Golden Beach	Silver Mine Bay Beach
Kadoorie Beach	Silverstrand Beach
Kwun Yam Beach	South Bay Beach

Grade 3 beaches are:

Approach Beach	Casam Beach
Big Wave Bay Beach	Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Cafeteria Old Beach	Ting Kau Beach

* Discovery Bay is a non-gazetted beach without lifeguard service.

Compared with the grading released last week, Discovery Bay and Upper Cheung Sha Beach have been upgraded from Grade 2 to Grade 1, and Lido Beach from Grade 3 to Grade 2. Kwun Yam Beach has been changed from Grade 1 to Grade 2.

"The changes are generally within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of the beaches," an EPD spokesman said.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, the EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.