

Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the service demand surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rate in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

Public views invited for proposals to enhance animal welfare in Hong Kong

The Government launched a three-month public consultation on the proposals for enhancing animal welfare today (April 26). Public views are welcomed.

A spokesperson for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said, "We attach great importance to animal welfare. In recent years, there has been a growing concern about issues related to animal welfare in society. Pet owners and animal welfare organisations expect the Government to review relevant legislation to not only minimise the chance of causing any unnecessary suffering to animals, but also to require persons responsible for animals to take positive steps to provide for their welfare needs, as well as to enhance the deterrent effect."

With reference to the relevant legislation and experience of overseas places and having taken into account views of animal welfare organisations, the general public and Legislative Council members, the Government, through amending the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance (Cap. 169), proposes to extend the existing legislation which prohibits and penalises acts of cruelty to animals to include taking positive actions on looking after animals well. The AFCD and animal welfare organisations will step up public education to enhance animal welfare.

The proposals include:

1. To introduce a positive "duty of care"

The AFCD proposes to impose a positive "duty of care" on persons responsible for animals to look after their animals well, empower a public officer to issue an improvement notice to persons where the duty of care has not been fulfilled, and set an appropriate level of penalty for the contravention of the duty of care;

2. To enhance the provisions for prevention of cruelty

The AFCD proposes to increase the maximum penalty for animal cruelty offences and empower the courts to disqualify a person convicted of an animal cruelty offence from keeping animals within a specified period of time or permanently; and

3. To enhance enforcement powers for safeguarding animal welfare

The AFCD proposes to provide public officers with the necessary powers of entry to premises and seizure of animals with a view to enhancing the protection of animals from unnecessary suffering.

Members of the public can download the consultation paper from the AFCD's dedicated website on public consultation(www.pets.gov.hk/english/animal_health_and_welfare/Proposals_to_Enhance_Animal_Welfare.html), the Food and Health Bureau's website (www.fhb.gov.hk) and the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/residents/government/publication/consultation/current.htm). The public can also reserve a seat at the four public forums held by the AFCD. Information on the forums is available at the above dedicated websites.

Views on the consultation paper should be sent by post to the Office of the Animal Management (Development) Division, AFCD, 5/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Hong Kong, by fax to 3110 1336, or by email to cap169_amendment@afcd.gov.hk on or before July 31 this year.

Fatal traffic accident in Sha Tin

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Sha Tin in the small hours of today (April 26) in which a 68-year-old man died.

At about 12.10am, a taxi driven by a 68-year-old man was travelling along Ngau Pei Sha Street towards Sha Tin, while a private car driven by a 33-year-old man was travelling along Ngau Pei Sha Street towards Kwong Yuen Estate. When approaching under Tate's Cairn Highway, the two vehicles reportedly collided.

The taxi driver was trapped inside the compartment and rescued by firemen. Sustaining serious injuries to his head and chest, he was sent to Prince of Wales Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at

1.13am. A 62-year-old female taxi passenger sustaining hand injuries was sent to Prince of Wales Hospital in conscious state.

The private car driver sustaining head injuries was sent to Prince of Wales Hospital in unconscious state. He was arrested for dangerous driving causing death and is being detained for further enquiries.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, New Territories South is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3661 1300 or 3661 1348.

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, after meeting representatives of medical groups to discuss matters relating to public healthcare manpower yesterday (April 25):

Reporter: (about today's meeting)

Secretary for Food and Health: Tonight's meeting is a discussion platform for all key medical stakeholders, including representatives from the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine, the Hong Kong Medical Council, the Hong Kong Medical Association and also the two universities, namely the Hong Kong University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, plus the Hospital Authority (HA) and the Department of Health (DH). Actually, we have started this platform in early March to discuss and try to resolve the problem of medical manpower shortage. This is our second meeting. I would describe this meeting as constructive and very harmonious. All parties have tried their best to provide their comments and proposals to attract more overseas doctors to come back to Hong Kong to work under the limited registration system.

First of all, we have looked into the proposals tabled at the meeting concerning the Medical Council, that is how to relax the current system of internship, or we call the assessment period, for overseas doctors that come back to work under limited registration. Different parties gave their comments. Our principle is to give an equal treatment, that is not a discriminatory treatment, to all doctors working at different parties, namely HA, DH and the two universities. This is our principle. The second principle is to provide incentives to attract people to come back. The more relax the proposal, the better it is. We have also discussed at the platform that,

apart from specialists, we should look into how to attract intermediate-level doctors as well as fresh graduates to work in Hong Hong. Finally, I put up to the platform that we should streamline the existing limited registration application procedures, so that doctors can come back to work in Hong Kong quicker.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Appeal for information on missing woman in Mong Kok (with photo)

Police today (April 25) appealed to the public for information on a Mainland woman who went missing in Mong Kok.

Huang Wanxiang, aged 63, went missing after she was last seen at MTR Mong Kok Station yesterday (April 24) morning. Her family made a report to Police today.

She is about 1.6 metres tall, 60 kilograms in weight and of medium build. She has a round face with yellow complexion and short black hair. She was last seen wearing a light-coloured long-sleeved shirt, black trousers, black shoes, and carrying a black shoulder bag.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing woman or may have seen her is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of Kowloon West on 3661 8038 or 9020 6542 or email to rmpu-kw@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.

