

Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme to be launched on August 6 (with photos)

The Department of Health (DH) will launch the Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme (CRCSP) on August 6 to subsidise in phases asymptomatic Hong Kong residents aged 50 to 75 to undergo screening tests for the prevention of colorectal cancer.

The CRCSP will be implemented in three phases. Starting on August 6, Hong Kong residents aged 61 to 75, i.e. those born in the years 1942 to 1957, will be eligible to join phase one of the CRCSP to undergo screening tests. Phase two will cover those aged 56 to 75 while phase three will extend to those aged 50 to 75. Eligible participants will be defined by their years of birth and the details and commencement dates of phases two and three will be announced in due course.

Hosting a press conference today (July 30) to announce details of the CRCSP, the Controller of the Centre for Health Protection of the DH, Dr Wong Ka-hing, pointed out that the DH launched the Colorectal Cancer Screening Pilot Programme, which has been operating smoothly, in September 2016. The Pilot Programme has served the purpose of identifying those who have colorectal cancer before they present with symptoms or individuals at increased risk of colorectal cancer and enabling them to receive early treatment. Sustaining the success will not only benefit the individual but also provide relief for healthcare services and alleviate social and economic burdens in the long run. To regularise the Pilot Programme as the CRCSP, the Government will set aside \$940 million over the coming five years.

Dr Wong said, "There is no quota for participants under the CRCSP. Taking into consideration the colorectal cancer screening recommendations of the Cancer Expert Working Group on Cancer Prevention and Screening, the Government will progressively extend the coverage of the CRCSP to Hong Kong residents aged 50 to 75, from those aged 61 to 70 under the Pilot Programme, to undergo screening tests upon regularisation. It is projected that the number of beneficiaries will be more than three times the current number, increasing from 0.82 million people to 2.55 million people. The DH will closely monitor its implementation and progress and review the services regularly with a view to fine-tuning the CRCSP and its procedures."

Colorectal cancer is the most common cancer locally. In 2015, there were 5 036 newly diagnosed colorectal cancer cases, accounting for 16.6 per cent of all new cancer cases, or about one in six new cancer cases. In 2016, colorectal cancer resulted in 2 089 deaths, accounting for 14.7 per cent of all cancer deaths, or about one in seven cancer deaths. It is the second most common cause of cancer death in Hong Kong, coming only after lung cancer.

Dr Wong explained that colorectal cancer is preventable through adopting a healthy lifestyle and well-organised screening. He said that prognosis of colorectal cancer can be significantly improved by early detection and prompt treatment. He encouraged eligible persons not to miss joining the CRCSP.

He pointed out that to combat the threat of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including cancers, the Government this year announced "Towards 2025: Strategy and Action Plan to Prevent and Control Non-communicable Diseases in Hong Kong", setting out nine local targets to be achieved by 2025, which include reducing the risk of premature mortality from cancer. Successful prevention and control of NCDs relies on collaborative efforts by various important stakeholders including government bureaux and departments, academia, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and each and every member of society.

Also present at the press conference, the Head of the Surveillance and Epidemiology Branch of the CHP, Dr Regina Ching, said that the Colorectal Cancer Information Technology System has been set up for the Programme and rides on the electronic Health Record Sharing System (eHRSS). Dr Ching reminded prospective participants to enrol in the eHRSS before joining the Programme.

The screening pathway comprises two stages:

- (1) Eligible persons must first make an appointment with a primary care doctor (PCD) participating in the Programme. After enrolment in the Programme, the participant will receive a government subsidy to undergo the Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT); and
- (2) If the FIT result is positive, the participant will be referred to see a colonoscopy specialist who has enrolled in the Programme to receive colonoscopy examination subsidised by the Government in order to find out the cause of bleeding.

The Programme is heavily subsidised by the Government. For the FIT screening arranged by the enrolled PCDs and second consultation to follow up on positive test results, the Government will provide a subsidy amount of \$280 for each consultation. Under the standard colonoscopy service package, the subsidy amount is \$8,500 if polyp removal is necessary, while the amount is \$7,800 if no polyp removal is needed.

Dr Ching also reviewed the results of the Pilot Programme. As of July 26, about 78 000 eligible persons (i.e. 9.5 per cent of the target population) had participated in the Pilot Programme and undergone FIT screening. That was equivalent to one-third of the 253 000 age-qualified persons registered in the eHRSS.

Furthermore, as of March 27, i.e. the first 18 months after the launch of the Pilot Programme, 68 744 eligible persons had participated and undergone FIT screening. Among the participants who had submitted FIT tubes with analysed results, 8 724 persons (around 13 per cent) had positive results. Among those who underwent colonoscopy examination services, 4 966

persons (around 69 per cent) had polyps removed that revealed colorectal adenomas. As their polyps have been removed in the course of examination, there is no chance for these polyps to become cancerous, which reiterates the importance of undergoing timely screening tests for identifying people at increased risk of disease for early treatment.

To date, 685 PCDs have successfully enrolled in the Programme covering nearly 1 005 locations, and 97 per cent of these PCDs will not charge any co-payment. In addition, 170 colonoscopy specialists have joined the Programme to provide colonoscopy examination services at 331 service locations. If no polyp removal is necessary, about 80 per cent will not require additional charges. If polyp removal is needed, about 70 per cent will not require additional charges.

Lastly, Dr Ching reminded FIT-negative participants to receive FIT re-screening every two years in order to maximise the programme's capability to prevent colorectal cancer. Starting from the end of September this year, the first batch of FIT-negative participants will begin to receive re-screening notifications via SMS, email or postal mail. They can visit any enrolled PCD clinic to receive subsidised FIT re-screening services.

Those who are interested in the Programme can visit the DH's thematic website www.colonscreen.gov.hk to find a list of enrolled PCDs and more information. The DH has also set up a dedicated hotline (3565 6288), which is operated by trained staff to provide a direct response to public enquiries as a more convenient service for the public.



Joint departmental operation conducted at Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter and its vicinity to address marine refuse

A joint departmental operation was held on July 28 and 29 to conduct

clean-up and enforcement actions at Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter and its vicinity to address the marine refuse problem. During the operation, a total of 14.5 tonnes of marine refuse was collected and seven fixed penalty notices were issued against littering.

A spokesman for the Inter-departmental Working Group on Marine Environmental Management today (July 30) said that since the establishment of the Working Group, the relevant departments (the Environmental Protection Department; the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD); the Marine Department (MD); the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department; and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD)) have been working closely to enhance cleaning at bathing beaches and coastal facilities, typhoon shelters and boat anchorages, marine parks and other coastal locations. In addition, the Working Group will continue to take forward various measures to keep the shorelines clean including enforcement actions, patrols and field inspections, installing drinking fountains at coastal recreational facilities and organising and providing funding support for publicity and education activities.

The spokesman said that Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter is one of the priority areas for cleaning by the MD. The MD has directed its cleaning contractor to deploy a scavenging fleet of at least eight vessels to clean up floating refuse in the vicinity daily (including on Sundays and public holidays) and from time to time conducts special operations as necessary to clean up the refuse trapped between moored vessels and the seawall. The cleaning contractor also collects domestic refuse from vessels moored at the typhoon shelter twice a day.

The Working Group has noted that refuse enters the water more easily at the landing steps on either side of Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter when there are busy activities of embarking on or disembarking from boats, especially during the holidays when marine excursions and leisure activities are more frequent. To address these problems, the MD, the FEHD and the LCSD have strengthened cleanup work during the periods when more people use the landing steps. The Working Group, together with relevant government departments, has also reviewed the locations and clearance frequencies of the refuse bins and recycling facilities near the landing steps to assist the public to properly dispose of waste and recyclable materials, hence preventing these items from entering the sea. In addition, relevant government departments will also conduct joint enforcement actions against littering along the coast from time to time and promote proper refuse disposal and good fish market practices to users of Aberdeen Typhoon Shelter, yacht clubs and the Aberdeen Wholesale Fish Market.

The spokesman added that keeping the shorelines clean cannot be achieved solely by the Government's cleanup operations. It is more important that members of the public jointly bear the responsibility to protect the environment by practising waste reduction at source to prevent refuse from entering the marine environment. The Government welcomes and thanks members of the public for initiating shoreline cleanup activities, showing their concern and care for the marine environment. A thematic website has been set

up by the Working Group to facilitate the organisation and participation of marine waste reduction activities by the community. For more details, please visit www.epd.gov.hk/epd/clean_shorelines/index-2.html.

HAD to open temporary night heat shelters

The Home Affairs Department will open 18 temporary night heat shelters tonight (July 30) 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 enquiries 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/Wan Chai –

Causeway Bay Community Centre
Waiting Lobby, 3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –

Lei Tung Community Hall
Lei Tung Estate, Ap Lei Chau

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –

Hung Hom Community Hall
Multi-purpose Room, 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
Nam Cheong Street, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –
Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
Hall, G/F, 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 –

Long Ping Community Hall
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

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 21 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.

56th Meeting of Hong Kong Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation opens for public enrolment

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation:

The 56th Meeting of the Hong Kong Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (HKCPEC), which will be held on August 8 (Wednesday), is now open for public enrolment.

The Chairman of the HKCPEC, Professor Matthew Lee, will chair the meeting. The meeting will cover the HKCPEC's activities and its participation at Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) events in 2017 and the first half of 2018, as well as the activities of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation during the period.

The meeting will be held at 2.30pm in Room 1827, 18/F, Trade and Industry Tower, 3 Concorde Road, Kowloon City.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the open session of the meeting. In view of the limited seating capacity at the meeting venue, admission will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Those interested in attending the meeting are requested to enrol with the HKCPEC Secretariat by noon on August 6 (Monday).

For enquiries, please contact the HKCPEC Secretariat on 2398 5449 or

2398 5594.

The HKCPEC was established in March 1990 to co-ordinate Hong Kong's participation in the PECC. In line with the nature of the PECC, the composition of the HKCPEC is tripartite, comprising members from the Government, the business sector and academia.

The PECC is a non-governmental organisation set up in 1980 to develop closer co-operation in trade and economic issues among economies in the region. For more information, please visit www.pecc.org.

Update on cluster of Rhinovirus cases in Siu Lam Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of patients infected with Rhinovirus in a female ward for severe intellectual disability, the spokesperson for Siu Lam Hospital made the following update today (July 30):

Three more patients (aged 26 to 42) in the ward presented with respiratory symptoms. Appropriate viral tests were arranged for the patients and their test results were positive for Rhinovirus. The patients concerned are being treated under isolation with stable condition.

Admission to the ward has been suspended and restricted visiting has been imposed. Infection control measures have already been stepped up according to established guidelines. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.