

Territory-wide flag-selling activity cancelled

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has been informed by Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong) Trustees Incorporated that the territory-wide flag-selling activity in public places scheduled to be held today (August 8) has been cancelled, a spokesman for the SWD said.

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities covered by the issued Public Subscription Permit, including any updated information, have been published on the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search/).

For enquiries, please contact Miss Tam of the organisation concerned at 2593 5442.

HKSAR Government explains work plan of Support Team from Central Government (with photos)

A spokesman for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (August 7) said the Mainland nucleic acid test support team (Support Team) formed in response to the request of the HKSAR Government has commenced work to assist in enhancing virus testing capacity, establishing temporary hospital as well as expanding the scale of the Community Treatment Facilities (CTF).

"The COVID-19 epidemic in Hong Kong remains severe. We expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Central Government for its proactive support to Hong Kong's anti-epidemic work and provision of needed assistance. Transparency is one of our principles in fighting the epidemic. Allowing the public to understand the work plan of the Support Team will help clarify public misunderstanding on its work and ensure the smooth implementation of relevant work," said the spokesman.

(1) Enhancing Hong Kong's virus testing capacity

The first batch of members of the Support Team set up by the Central Government arrived in Hong Kong on August 2 for familiarisation, and the leader of the Support Team, Mr Yu Dewen, who is the Second-level Inspector of the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, also arrived in Hong Kong on

August 6. To meet the needs of the HKSAR Government to extend the coverage of community testing, the Support Team has assisted in the preparatory work for the temporary laboratory with a view to substantially ramping up the virus testing capability of Hong Kong. The work group on testing of the HKSAR, led by the Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Health), had a working meeting with the Support Team this morning at the Central Government Offices to discuss the support from the Central Government rendered to Hong Kong to enhance COVID-19 testing capacity and to launch large-scale community testing. With the assistance of the Support Team, the Government will continue to implement and expand the voluntary Targeted Group Testing Scheme (TGTS), as well as to prepare for the Community Testing Scheme (CTS), so as to identify infected persons as early as possible.

Targeted Group Testing Scheme

The voluntary TGTS has been introduced in phases since mid-July covering groups with higher-risks including staff members of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) and nursing homes, staff of boarding section of special schools, taxi and public light bus drivers, restaurant staff, market tenants and staff, slaughterhouse staff, as well as frontline staff of the property management sector. The estimated number of individuals involved is around 500 000. In view of the confirmed cases identified in several public housing estates in the Tsz Wan Shan area, the Government has in collaboration with non-governmental organisations provided virus testing services for some 40 000 residents of nearby public housing estates. Starting from today, the scope of testing will be gradually extended to cover 46 buildings in Wong Tai Sin district, Kwun Tong district, Tuen Mun district and Yau Tsim Mong district, involving about 86 000 residents.

As at August 5, a total of 54 samples are reported to be preliminary positive out of the 137 000 tests conducted for above target groups, or at a positive rate of 0.04%. Due to the cluster of infected cases among foreign domestic helpers (FDHs), the Government announced yesterday to extend the coverage of testing to FDHs staying in boarding facilities of employment agencies. Considering the infection risk of pregnant women and their need for delivery at hospitals, the Home Affairs Department will partner with Yan Chai Hospital to provide virus testing services for pregnant women.

With the significantly enhanced virus testing capacity under the assistance from the Central Government, the HKSAR Government is planning for the second phase of TGTS to cover hotel staff with contact with travellers, frontline staff of public transportation services, staff providing welfare and care services to elderly and other target groups, frontline employees of government departments with frequent contact with members of the public, and teachers and staff of secondary schools, primary schools, special schools, kindergarten and child care centres. The Government will keep in view the epidemic situation and continue to extend and refine the TGTS.

The second phase of the TGTS will also include targeted groups with genuine need for repeated testing, for example, staff members of RCHEs, RCHDs

and nursing homes. It is expected to involve an addition of around 500 000 individuals. The second phase of the TGTS is expected to be rolled out gradually from next week the earliest for a period of two to three weeks for completion in early September. Together with the first phase, the Government hopes that some one million persons would be tested under the TGTS. The Food and Health Bureau and relevant departments will announce the details of the scheme in due course.

Community Testing Scheme

In addition to the TGTS, the HKSAR Government will introduce the CTS to provide virus testing services free-of-charge to all Hong Kong citizens who may join on a voluntary basis. The objective is to identify infected persons early, particularly those who are asymptomatic. The scheme is expected to be launched gradually after two weeks' time the soonest. Members of the public are encouraged to participate in the CTS. In implementing the CTS, the Government aims to complete the tests within the shortest duration, to ensure that specimen bottles are distributed in the community via different channels to facilitate easy collection by members of the public and to maintain social distancing. The relevant process will be conducted electronically as far as possible with specimen bottle duly tracked, in order to ensure that each submitted specimen will be arranged for testing.

The Support Team had discussed with the HKSAR Government to provide support through three testing services suppliers from the Mainland in order to implement the large-scale testing schemes set out above. These include BGI (via Sunrise Diagnostic Centre in Hong Kong), Kingmed Diagnostics (Hong Kong) and HybriBio (via Hong Kong Molecular Pathology Diagnostic Centre in Hong Kong) to expeditiously increase the capacity of testing in Hong Kong. These testing services suppliers have rich experience in COVID-19 testing and are well established third-party testing agencies in the Mainland. They are subject to regulation under relevant laws in Hong Kong. It is expected that these suppliers will perform close to 500 000 tests per day in Hong Kong following the ramping up of testing capacity.

To support the implementation of CTS, BGI has started preparation for air-inflated laboratory to enhance its testing capacity and utilise the support from the Support Team. This temporary laboratory seeks to substantially expand the testing capacity in Hong Kong in a short period of time, and relevant setting will be removed after completion of relevant tests. On site selection, having considered various factors including the space required for a temporary large-scale testing facility, the need to maintain certain distance between the site and nearby residence, as well as logistics and ancillary support, the HKSAR Government has selected the Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park Sports Centre in Sai Ying Pun for BGI to set up its temporary air-inflated laboratory. The laboratory complies with the requirements of a Biosafety Level 2 laboratory and will implement relevant infection control measures to ensure hygiene and appropriate waste management without emission of harmful gas.

Handling of personal data

The personal information provided by members of the public who voluntarily participate in testing will be encrypted and stored in the servers of the Government's data centres. They will not be transferred beyond the boundary of Hong Kong. The testing services providers will only have access to the barcode of the specimen bottle for reporting the test result to the Government. They will not have access to the personal data of individual members of the public. This arrangement is similar to the current testing arrangement for staff members of RCHes and taxi and public light bus drivers, under which the registration of persons undergoing testing will be carried out by relevant government departments, and the testing personnel collecting specimens will only be given specimen bottles with a barcode. They will not know the personal information of the person being tested.

The collection and use of any personal data for the purpose of above-mentioned testing shall comply with the provisions of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486). Relevant data will only be available to the Department of Health or relevant departments for the purpose of disease control. The workflow does not involve the provision of personal data to any organisations or persons outside Hong Kong. The Government has adopted measures to minimise the need for personal data to be collected and accessed. Further, all testing will only be conducted in Hong Kong, samples of which will not be transported outside Hong Kong and will be destroyed after testing.

Medical Laboratory Technologists (Special Exemption) Regulation and arrangement for introducing technicians from the Mainland

Given the impending need to carry out large-scale testing in the shortest possible time to protect public health, the Government requires a large number of testing personnel. However, after discussions with the medical laboratory sector, it is agreed that Hong Kong does not have sufficient laboratory testing personnel with adequate training and experience to perform COVID-19 testing to meet the need in undergoing the CTS. The Government considers it necessary to invite laboratory testing personnel who possesses relevant testing experience from the Mainland to come to Hong Kong to assist in performing COVID-19 tests for a short period of time so as to launch CTS within a short period of time. The Government will gazette today the "Medical Laboratory Technologists (Special Exemption) Regulation" to temporarily exempt laboratory testing personnel who has obtained National accreditation from the registration requirements for medical laboratory testing in Hong Kong under the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance (Cap. 359), such that relevant laboratory testing personnel who possesses sufficient testing training and experience can carry out the testing as soon as possible.

The HKSAR Government has liaised with the National Health Commission (NHC) to arrange members of the National accredited laboratory testing personnel who possess adequate training and experience on COVID-19 tests to come to Hong Kong to conduct tests in Hong Kong. They will only engage in COVID-19 related testing. Upon completion of CTS, they will return to the

Mainland and will not stay in Hong Kong for other work.

The spokesman reiterated that the core duty of the Support Team coordinated by the Central Government and established by NHC is to help strengthen the HKSAR's virus testing capacity. Members of the Support Team will participate in the medical laboratory work, but not treatment of patients. The HKSAR Government also has no plan to admit medical and nursing staff from the Mainland to perform any patient treatment work in Hong Kong.

(2) Establishing temporary treatment facilities

Temporary hospital

To relieve the pressure on the demand on public hospital beds, the HKSAR Government, with the Central Government's assistance, is planning to construct a two-storey temporary hospital on a 3.2 hectare piece of land near the AsiaWorld-Expo (AWE), in order to provide negative pressure wards with 800 to 1 000 beds and relevant medical equipment. The detailed works and appliance arrangement, as well as number of beds and other details will be further deliberated between the work groups of the HKSAR and the Mainland.

Community Treatment Facilities (mobile field hospitals)

As regards CTF, colloquially known as "mobile field hospitals", the Hospital Authority (HA) has established its CTF in Hall One of AWE to provide 500 beds. The facility, commissioned on August 1, provides triage of confirmed cases and isolation for patients with mild symptoms who are in stable condition, in order to ease the pressure on the demand of isolation beds in public hospitals.

Meanwhile, HA is preparing to expand CTF to Hall Two of AWE. The Central Government, on the HKSAR Government's request, had urgently supplied 400 beds and other relevant equipment to HA last week to facilitate the set-up work at Hall Two of AWE, so that it could be completed as soon as possible to commence service. In addition, in order to better prepare for a potential next wave of the epidemic, the Government is planning to further expand CTF to some of the other halls in AWE to provide about 1 000 beds.

The Mainland's mobile field hospital teams have considerable experience in setting up similar treatment facilities. To further enhance CTF in AWE, the Government has invited the Central Government to assist in arranging the relevant teams to share their mobile field hospital experience with HA, provide professional advice and recommendations on the treatment facilities in AWE, and to supply the relevant hospital beds and equipment, including temporary negative pressure treatment facilities. The HKSAR Government is arranging a video conference next week between HA and the Hubei mobile field hospital expert team to kick-starting the relevant exchange and follow up work.

The Mainland mobile field hospital expert team will focus on venue design and set-up arrangements, and will provide professional advice to the

operation of the relevant facilities. The team will not participate in any clinical work, and will therefore not require local professional medical or nursing registration.

The HKSAR Government is actively pursuing the above work. With the Central Government's support and the community's joint efforts in fighting the virus, it is hoped that the spread of epidemic will be curbed as soon as possible.



CHP investigates 89 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) has announced that as of 0.00am, August 7, the CHP was investigating 89 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 3939 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 3 938 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, eight had travel history during the incubation period.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

In view of the severe epidemic situation, the CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. As a number of recent cases involve elderly people, the CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with

everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled,

performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;

- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and

- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

Specifications under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation gazetted

In view of the development and severity of the COVID-19 epidemic situation in Hong Kong, the Government earlier made the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) and the Secretary for Food and Health (SFH) subsequently gazetted specifications under Cap. 599H to impose conditions based on public health grounds on travellers who have visited specified high-risk places within 14 days before arrival in Hong Kong in order to reduce the health risk they may bring to Hong Kong, thereby further strengthening epidemic control efforts.

Currently, a traveller who, on the day on which the traveller boarded a civil aviation aircraft that arrives at, or is about to arrive at Hong Kong (specified aircraft), or during the 14 days before that day, has stayed in any specified place (i.e. Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, South Africa and the United States of America), must provide documents relating to a nucleic acid test for COVID-19 and room reservation in a hotel in Hong Kong.

The Government has all along been reviewing the development of the latest epidemic situation globally in order to update the specified countries and places from time to time and impose conditions on travellers who have stayed in those places. Taking into account the latest public health risk assessment, and the changes and developments of the epidemic situation, the Government has decided to maintain the above-mentioned nine countries as specified places and issued the latest specifications to simplify relevant conditions having regard to the circumstances on the ground since the implementation of the regulation. Details are as follows:

The relevant traveller must provide the following documents:

(a) the test report in English or Chinese issued by a laboratory or healthcare institution bearing the name of the relevant traveller identical to that in his/her valid travel document to show that:

(i) the relevant traveller underwent a nucleic acid test for COVID-19, the sample for which was taken from the relevant traveller within 72 hours before the scheduled time of departure of the specified aircraft;

(ii) the test conducted on the sample is a nucleic acid test for COVID-19; and

(iii) the result of the test is the relevant traveller was tested negative for COVID-19; and

(b) if the relevant report is not in English or Chinese or does not contain all of the aforementioned information, a written confirmation in English or Chinese issued by the laboratory or healthcare institution bearing the name of the relevant traveller identical to that in his/her valid travel document, setting out all of the aforementioned information and presented together with the test report; and

(c) documentary proof in English or Chinese to show that the laboratory or healthcare institution is ISO 15189 accredited or is recognised or approved by the relevant authority of the government of the place in which the laboratory or healthcare institution is located; and

(d) the relevant traveller has confirmation in English or Chinese of room reservation in a hotel in Hong Kong for not less than 14 days starting on the day of the arrival of the relevant traveller in Hong Kong.

The operator of the specified aircraft should submit to the Department of Health (DH) before the specified aircraft arrives at Hong Kong a document in a form specified by DH confirming that each relevant traveller has, before being checked-in for the flight to Hong Kong on the aircraft, produced for boarding on the aircraft the above documents.

The relevant specifications will come into effect at 0.00am on August 10, 2020, and will remain effective until further notice.

If any condition specified by the SFH is not met in relation to any relevant traveller on the conveyance, each of the operators of the conveyance commits an offence, and is liable on conviction to the maximum penalty of a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months. If an operator fails to comply with a requirement to provide information, or knowingly or recklessly provides any information that is false or misleading in a material particular, he or she is liable on conviction to the maximum penalty of a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

As for travellers, if a traveller coming to Hong Kong fails to comply with a requirement to provide information, or knowingly or recklessly provides any information that is false or misleading in a material particular, he or she is liable on conviction to the maximum penalty of a

fine at level 3 (\$10,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Travellers to Hong Kong should note that they will be mandated to wait for their test results at a designated location after their deep throat saliva samples are collected for conducting testing for COVID-19 at DH's Temporary Specimen Collection Centre pursuant to the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599).

If their test results are negative, they will be allowed to go to the hotel for which they made the reservation to continue the 14-day compulsory quarantine until completion. If their results are positive, the travellers will be transferred to hospital for isolation and treatment.

The Government will continue to monitor closely the situation including the development of the epidemic situation both globally and locally and changes in the volume of cross-boundary passenger traffic, and will not hesitate to adopt further measures if necessary.

Arrangement of COVID-19 Community Testing Scheme in Shan King Estate in Tuen Mun

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) today (August 7) successively extended the scope of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Community Testing Scheme, which includes the Shan King Estate in Tuen Mun District.

Making reference to the Tsz Wan Shan Testing Scheme, the original proposal of the testing scheme in Shan King Estate was to use the public area on the ground floor of each building to distribute throat-swab sampling kits and registration forms; and collect specimens for testing to facilitate the residents. However, the owners' corporation of Shan King Estate and the property management company hired by the owners' corporation adopt an uncooperative stance and have yet to agree to lend the public space for the Scheme. Therefore, the Tuen Mun District Office (TMDO) is unable to distribute and collect sampling kits in the public area on the ground floor of each block in the estate. The HAD expresses deep regret over this act.

In view of the situation, the TMDO has contacted the Taoist Ching Chung Primary School in Shan King Estate and is grateful for their co-operation by lending the covered playground to the TMDO to distribute the sampling kits. The collection point of specimens is located at Shan King Community Hall.

The details of the Shan King Estate Community Testing Scheme are as follows:

Targeted buildings under the Scheme	Date and time for sampling kits distribution	Distribution Point	Date and time for sample collection	Collection Point
King Mei House and King Yip House	August 9, 2020 (Sunday) 8am to 8pm	Covered Playground of Taoist Ching Chung Primary School	August 10, 2020 (Monday) 7am to 12noon	Shan King Community Hall
King Lok House and King Wah House	August 10, 2020 (Monday) 8am to 8pm	Covered Playground of Taoist Ching Chung Primary School	August 11, 2020 (Tuesday) 7am to 12noon	Shan King Community Hall
King Lai House and King Fu House	August 11, 2020 (Tuesday) 8am to 8pm	Covered Playground of Taoist Ching Chung Primary School	August 12, 2020 (Wednesday) 7am to 12noon	Shan King Community Hall
King On House, King Wing House and King Kwai House	August 12, 2020 (Wednesday) 8am to 8pm	Covered Playground of Taoist Ching Chung Primary School	August 13, 2020 (Thursday) 7am to 12noon	Shan King Community Hall

The HAD expresses gratitude for the Taoist Ching Chung Primary School's assistance in providing the venue for the distribution of sampling kits. Upon completion of the Testing Scheme in Shan King Estate, the TMD0 will conduct thorough cleansing of the venues used for the distribution and collection of specimens.

For enquiries of the above Testing Scheme, please contact the TMD0 at 2451 3055.