

Government welcomes passage of Pharmacy and Poisons (Amendment) Bill 2019

The Food and Health Bureau welcomed the passage of the Pharmacy and Poisons (Amendment) Bill 2019 (the Bill) by the Legislative Council today (July 17).

The Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap. 138) (the Ordinance) has been amended to introduce a clear regulatory framework for Advanced Therapy Products (ATPs) which cover gene therapy products, somatic cell therapy products and tissue engineered products. The rapid scientific advancement in the research and development of ATPs offers great medical potential for benefiting patients. At the same time, ATPs need to be carefully managed due to their complicated nature, risks and possible long-term side effects.

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, said, "Due to the high-risk and complex nature of ATPs, a clear and dedicated regulatory framework on the research and therapeutic use of ATPs will safeguard public health and facilitate their development."

Under the new regulatory framework, ATPs will form a specific subset of pharmaceutical products under the Ordinance. As such, requirements for pharmaceutical products under Cap. 138 and other relevant ordinances will apply to ATPs. Licensed manufacturers of ATPs are also required to comply with the Good Manufacturing Practices and relevant labelling and record keeping requirements.

The new regulatory regime will come into operation on a day to be appointed by the Secretary for Food and Health by a notice published at the Gazette (about one year later). As such, the industry will have ample time to get prepared before the new regulatory framework come into operation.

Government welcomes passage of Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2020

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, welcomed the passage of the Insurance (Amendment) Bill 2020 by the Legislative Council today (July 17).

The new Ordinance seeks to amend the Insurance Ordinance (Cap. 41) to

provide for a new regulatory regime for the insurance-linked securities business and expand the scope of insurable risks of captive insurers set up in Hong Kong.

Mr Hui said that the new Ordinance would create new business opportunities for the insurance sector and generate demand for related professional services. This would help consolidate Hong Kong's position as an international risk management centre.

Going forward, the Government and the Insurance Authority will proceed with the next stage of preparatory work, including formulation of implementation details and drafting of subsidiary legislation. The target is to commence the new Ordinance by end 2020 or early 2021.

[HKETO in Wuhan hosts reception for 23rd anniversary of establishment of HKSAR \(with photos\)](#)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Wuhan (WHETO) today (July 17) held the Reception for the 23rd Anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) in Wuhan, Hubei Province. Around 120 guests attended the reception, including representatives from various government departments and authorities, consulates and related institutions, chambers of commerce and corporations in Hubei and Wuhan and Hong Kong people living in Wuhan. The Director of the WHETO, Mr Vincent Fung, the Deputy Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office in Hubei, Mr Chen Hanhua and the Director of the Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and Foreign Affairs Office of the Hubei Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Ms Hu Liming and the Deputy Secretary of Wuhan Municipal Government, Ms Fang Jie jointly officiated at the reception.

In his welcoming remarks, Mr Fung said that more than 4 000 Hong Kong residents had been stranded in various cities in Hubei Province under lockdown during the COVID-19 epidemic. Hong Kong-based staff members of the WHETO voluntarily stayed to offer various emergency services such as provision of medicine, face masks, supplies and an emergency hotline for the Hong Kong residents who were stranded in the province. The WHETO also assisted in the arrangement of eight chartered flights to carry more than 1 000 Hong Kong residents stranded in Hubei back to Hong Kong in March. Mr Fung expressed his gratitude to the CPC Hubei Provincial Committee, the Hubei Provincial Government and the municipal governments in Hubei Province for their support for the WHETO's work and their assistance rendered to Hong Kong people stranded during the epidemic.

Mr Fung remarked that since its return to the motherland, Hong Kong has maintained its stability and prosperity under the framework of "one country, two systems". He said Hong Kong is an international metropolis leveraging the unique advantage of being backed by the motherland and open to the world, but noted that disturbances and violence in the past year have traumatised the Hong Kong community, jeopardised the nation's security and put the city's stability and prosperity at risk. He described the passage of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress as a historic step to improve the system for Hong Kong to safeguard the country's sovereignty, territorial integrity and security. It sets out a clear direction to help "one country, two systems" get back on track and restore stability to Hong Kong society in a timely manner, he said.

Mr Fung pointed out that 2020 is the sixth year of the establishment of the WHETO. In the year ahead, the WHETO will adhere to the Hong Kong people's can-do spirit in keeping up its services through strengthening exchanges and co-operation in various fields between Hong Kong and the provinces in the central region.



[Faecal sample from pet cat tests](#)

positive for COVID-19 virus

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said today (July 17) that a faecal sample of a pet cat sent to the AFCD had tested positive for the COVID-19 virus.

The current case involves a Domestic short-haired cat that lived in Choi Hung. When the owner was confirmed with COVID-19, the cat was sent for quarantine at the animal keeping facility at the Hong Kong Port of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge on July 10. The Department has repeatedly collected oral cavity, nasal, rectal and faecal samples from the cat for tests these few days. The faecal sample collected on July 13 was tested positive with COVID-19 virus. However, subsequent samples taken were all tested negative. The cat has not shown any signs of disease at present.

The AFCD will continue to closely monitor the cat and conduct repeated testing.

The spokesman reminded pet owners to adopt good hygiene practices (including hand washing before and after being around or handling animals, their food, or supplies, as well as avoiding kissing them) and to maintain a clean and hygienic household environment. People who are sick should restrict contact with animals. If any changes in the health condition of the pets are spotted, advice from a veterinarian should be sought as soon as possible.

The spokesman emphasised that currently there is no evidence that pets are playing a role in the spread of human infections with COVID-19 virus. Pet owners should always maintain good hygiene practices and under no circumstances should they abandon their pets.

FEHD arranges one-off free COVID-19 testing service for restaurant staff (with photos/video)

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (July 17) launched the COVID-19 testing service for staff of restaurants with seating areas. Starting from today, restaurant operators could make registration online through FEHD's website (www.fehd.gov.hk) while public market cooked food/light refreshment stalls and licensed cooked food hawker stalls operators will be contacted by the testing agency (Prenetics Limited), thus obviating the need for making registration.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "The epidemic situation in Hong Kong has

become severe since early July. To strengthen the anti-epidemic work, the Government has decided to provide virus test for high risk groups to safeguard public health. Among them, the catering business staff group (including licensed restaurants, licensed light refreshment restaurants, licensed marine restaurants, licensed factory canteens, school canteens, staff canteens, public market cooked food/light refreshment stalls and licensed cooked food hawker stalls) will be provided with voluntary one-off free virus testing service.

The spokesman said, "The testing service provided for restaurant staff started from today. Operators of restaurants may make registration online at the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/events/covid19_test/restaurant.html). Operators of public market cooked food/light refreshment stalls and licensed cooked food hawker stalls will not need to make registration, and the testing agency will contact them direct."

The spokesman said, "Under the scheme, the testing agency will be responsible for the provision of one-stop service covering specimen taking and testing. The testing agency will deliver specimen bottles to restaurants for collecting deep throat saliva samples, and then collect the samples in the subsequent one to two days for testing. Cases with positive results will be relayed to the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health for follow-up. The testing agency will work closely with the FEHD to determine priority set with reference to a risk-based approach, manpower resources available and number of registered restaurants."

The testing agency plans to cover areas including Wong Tai Sin and Kwun Tong in its work for these few days, and has started today by dispatching staff to the Wong Tai Sin area to distribute specimen bottles. The testing agency will progressively follow up the testing work for restaurant staff in other areas.

The FEHD strongly appeals to the food industry to actively participate in the testing scheme, and continue to comply with the directions in the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), and to maintain environmental hygiene continuously with a view to ensuring cleanliness of the premises and food safety.

For details of the testing programme, please call the hotline of the testing agency (Prenetics Limited) at 3008 8319 or visit the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk).

