

CHP investigates case of Legionnaires' disease in hospital

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (June 26) investigating a case of Legionnaires' disease (LD) in Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

The male patient, aged 77 with underlying illness, was admitted to TMH on June 12 due to medical conditions. He developed fever on June 21. He was transferred to the Intensive Care Unit on the next day for further management. His clinical diagnosis was chest infection. He is currently in critical condition.

His tracheal aspirate was tested positive for *Legionella* species upon laboratory testing.

"Epidemiological investigations with TMH are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any. Relevant water samples and environmental swabs have been collected from potential sources for laboratory testing," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Tracing of contacts including staff and in-patients in ward is ongoing and those identified have been put under medical surveillance. The CHP has provided health advice against LD to staff and in-patients, including those with weakened immunity who should use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing. Investigation is ongoing.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may become infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not water directly from the tap. Also, clean and maintain humidifiers/devices regularly according to manufacturers' instructions.

Never leave stagnant water in a humidifier/device. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol consumption;
- Strainers in water taps and shower heads should be inspected, cleaned, descaled and disinfected regularly or at a frequency recommended by the manufacturer;
- If a fresh-water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres (μm) and the filter needs to be changed periodically according to the manufacturer's recommendations;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow doctors' professional advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile water (not distilled or tap water) to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain the device regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2 μm filters. Never leave stagnant water in the device. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
 1. Wear gloves and a face mask;
 2. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
 3. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
 4. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
 5. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

FHB responds on incident at Hong Kong Red Cross BTS blood donation event

In response to media enquiries about the behaviour of an individual staff member of the Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service (BTS) at a blood donation event earlier at the Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Headquarters, a spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) today (June 26) made the following response:

"The FHB expresses regret over the unprofessional behaviour of an individual BTS staff member during the blood donation event conducted at the Auxiliary Police Headquarters, and has requested the Hospital Authority and the BTS to investigate the matter in accordance with the established mechanism and follow it up seriously. Healthcare staff must at all times abide by the principle of equal treatment for all and provide services in a professional manner.

"There is no substitute for blood, and maintaining a stable blood supply is very important to save patients. Over the years, members of the disciplined services have been very supportive and actively took part in blood donation activities organised by the BTS to maintain a stable supply of blood in Hong Kong. We express our heartfelt thanks to the disciplined services staff for their spirit of donating blood to save lives and hope that this individual incident will not affect blood collection activities."

Hospital Authority response to media enquiries on a recent blood donation drive incident

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

In response to media enquiries, the spokesperson of Hospital Authority (HA) today (June 26) gave the following response:

The Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service (BTS) has initiated investigation regarding the arrangement of a recent blood donation drive.

The HA is responsible for the daily operation and staff of the BTS. The HA received a complaint alleging a particular staff member's inappropriate behaviour which had upset the blood donors on site. The HA expressed regret that the blood donation event was eventually suspended.

The HA reiterates that public hospital healthcare staff should demonstrate professionalism to provide equitable service to all citizens indiscriminately. If the investigation findings confirm any unprofessional behaviour, the HA will follow up seriously in accordance with established human resources procedures.

The HA thanks members of the public for their enthusiastic support and extends apology for the incident. BTS pledges to continue its professional services for ensuring an adequate blood supply and safeguarding donors and blood safety.

Commissioner for Innovation and Technology speaks on Distance Business Programme (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Commissioner for Innovation and Technology, Ms Rebecca Pun, at a media session at the Central Government Offices today (June 26):

Reporter: To pull up on the Chinese question, could you talk about what kinds of sectors are involved and what are the most common type of IT solutions mentioned in the applications that have been submitted. And you also talked about how the Scheme doesn't guarantee a full grant of subsidy for the applications. So could you tell us a little bit more? Thank you.

Commissioner for Innovation and Technology: Maybe I should talk about the most popular business IT solutions requested (by those enterprises with their applications approved). They are online business, digital customer experience enhancement, online customer services and engagement, remote document management, cloud storage and remote access services, as well as other online/cloud-based business support systems. Those are quite popular requests at the moment. Among the over 1 000 cases that we have approved, they come from the retail sector, the import and export sectors, as well as education and training sectors and services such as tourism. So there are different types of industries covered in the over 1 000 approved cases. As far as the funding request is concerned, as I have explained, we have transparent vetting criteria to ensure that the public money will be put to good use and prudent use of public money. The vetting criteria include the relevance of the proposed project to the applicant's business, the reasonableness of the budget, the reasonableness of the implementation details, the capability of service providers as well as any adverse record of the service providers as known to us. So it is important that we continue to implement the vetting criteria to make sure that the money is well spent in order to support as

many enterprises as possible with our budget under the Distance Business Programme. It is obvious that under the epidemic, many more businesses would like to try to conduct the business online in order to maintain their competitiveness. Thank you.

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

SDEV speaks to media on quarterly land sale programme for July to September 2020

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, at a media session today (June 26) on the quarterly land sale programme for July to September 2020:

Reporter: First of all, on the Central plot, you spoke about the "two-envelope" approach earlier. Can you give us more details on how will the vetting be done, in terms of the weighting between the design as well as the price? Who will be the ones to judge the design of this programme? Will there be a committee or some sort of advisors to give the designs and the proposals their weighting? My second question is on the overall land sale programme. Given the overall business environment, and also concerns and uncertainties with the pandemic going on, are you concerned that there will be unsuccessful... the bidding prices for these plots will not meet the government's lowest bottom prices for all these plots?

Secretary for Development: Thank you for your questions. Your first question, the "two-envelope" approach. We have already announced that the allocation of scores between the two envelopes will be 50:50. So basically, they will carry equal weights. The evaluation committee will be staffed by essentially civil servants. As we are talking about tender and government procurement, according to government procurement procedures, it will be (evaluated by) a panel of civil servants. We have also said that the panel of civil servants will be advised by outside professionals. This will be the overall framework. With regard to the specific requirements, as I said earlier, we will announce those when we issue the tender documents. Please be patient for now.

Your second question pertains to the economic prospect. The way we look at the economy and the way we look at land sale is as follows. Land sale does not only generate revenue for the government. For example, if we are talking about Grade A offices, it is also important in generating economic activities for Hong Kong. If we are talking about residential land, the land supply is also important. So that's why in the past we said we do not hoard. We will put up the relevant sites for sale as and when they are ready. That continues

to be our main philosophy. And we do not sell land cheaply. There will be a reserve price for each site that we sell by tender. If it so happens that all the price submissions are below the reserve price, then the site will not go out. If you look at the past eight years, we sold about 180 sites by tender. The number of sites that could not go out because the price submissions were below the reserve price was less than 10. The percentage is not that big. That's an inherent risk the government will have to accept.

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