

Transcript of remarks of press conference on Cash Payout Scheme (with video)

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, joined by the Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury), Ms Alice Lau; the Co-ordinator (Special Duties) of the Financial Secretary's Office, Ms Jessie Wong; and the Government Chief Information Officer, Mr Victor Lam, held a press conference this morning (June 8) on the Cash Payout Scheme. Following is the transcript of remarks of the press conference.

Reporter: Secretary, can you talk about, like, the privacy issues? I heard you mention that this may be used again, but are you saying that this will only be used for giving money to residents or would there be other occasions where data collected here would be passed on to other departments? And can you briefly talk about the process involving the cash handouts, say, for a person who has been using e-banking, what would be the steps? For a person who is going through the paperwork, the Hongkong Post step, how would that involve, like would that mean people are waiting for a longer period of time for the money? Thank you.

Financial Secretary: The fastest way to receive the money from the Government is to apply through electronic registration via your banks and receive the money through direct transfer into bank account. This is the fastest way. If the registration is to be done in paper form, obviously it will entail more administrative procedures and the time required will be longer. As to your question about data privacy, if I may invite Ms Wong to respond to that.

Co-ordinator (Special Duties) of the Financial Secretary's Office: We will set out clearly in the personal information collection statement in the registration form, stating that the personal data we collected for this scheme will also be used for similar schemes, like cash or non-cash handout or refund, if any, in the future. We will set out clearly that the schemes are for similar purpose(s), say, to relieve people's financial difficulties, boost local consumption and/or share the wealth of the Government. In gist, we will set out clearly the purposes that we may use the data for in future schemes. So, when the registrants make the registration, they will give consent for the purposes.

Reporter: Sorry, just a follow up, of that private bank, like virtual bank asking people to register through them to get an extra \$1,000, do you think people should be concerned about their privacy ...?

Financial Secretary: I understand that there is a virtual bank launching promotional programmes to offer people to open account with them with some financial incentive. In this respect, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority has all along put in place very stringent data privacy requirements to make sure

the banks are using the data collected properly for banking purposes. The requirement in this respect is the same regardless of whether it is a virtual bank or a bank with physical branches. I believe going forward when this cash payout scheme is launched, the business sector may roll out different incentive programmes to attract target customers, but we are very confident in our regulatory framework and requirement with regard to the protection of the integrity of the data collected by these different institutions.

Reporter: Hi, Secretary, can I ask what are your considerations of whether to give out a second round of cash- out payment? Will you consider about the high unemployment rate or the hard-hit situation meanwhile in the society? Thank you.

Financial Secretary: We keep an open mind as to whether to do another round of cash handout. We are monitoring the situation very closely, but I would reiterate that to deal with the economic challenge and to relieve the pressure on our people, we need to have a combination of measures. Cash handout is just one of these measures. In terms of direct assistance to the people, apart from cash payout we have schemes like rebate of taxes, rebate of rates, etc, but we have to tackle the issue in a comprehensive manner, meaning apart from direct payout to our people, we need to support employment, we need to roll out measures to sectors hard hit by the current pandemic situation. All in all, in the Budget as well as the two rounds of Anti-epidemic Fund, the total amount of different measures comes to about \$290 billion, which is quite a lot. In this financial year, 2020-21, we are expecting a very high deficit, to the order of about \$280 billion or more. So we have to be very careful, having due regard to the affordability of the Government in rolling out different measures.

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

Public urged not to buy or consume slimming product with undeclared Western drug ingredient (with photo)

The Department of Health (DH) today (June 8) appealed to the public not to buy or consume a slimming product named Leisure Slimming Capsule as it was found to contain an undeclared and banned drug ingredient that might be dangerous to one's health.

Acting upon intelligence, a sample of the above product was purchased via a social media network platform for analysis. The test result from the Government Laboratory revealed that the sample contained the banned drug ingredient sibutramine. The DH's investigation is continuing.

Sibutramine is a Part 1 poison under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance (Cap. 138) (the Ordinance), which was once used as an appetite suppressant. Since November 2010, pharmaceutical products containing sibutramine have been banned in Hong Kong because of an increased cardiovascular risk.

According to the Ordinance, all pharmaceutical products must be registered with the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of Hong Kong before they can be legally sold in the market. Illegal sale or possession of unregistered pharmaceutical products or Part 1 poisons are criminal offences. The maximum penalty for each offence is a fine of \$100,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The DH spokesman strongly urged members of the public not to buy products of unknown or doubtful composition, or to consume products from unknown sources. Members of the public who have purchased the above product should stop consuming it immediately. They should consult healthcare professionals for advice if feeling unwell after consumption.

The spokesman added that weight control should be achieved through a balanced diet and appropriate exercise. The public should consult healthcare professionals before using any medication for weight control. They may visit the website of the Drug Office of the DH for "[Health messages on overweight problem and slimming products](#)" and "[Information on slimming products with undeclared Western drug ingredients](#)" for more information.

The public may submit the above product to the Drug Office of the DH at Room 1801, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, during office hours for disposal.



Vetting work of Retail Sector Subsidy Scheme completed

A Government spokesman said today (June 8) that the vetting work of the Retail Sector Subsidy Scheme under the first round of the Anti-epidemic Fund has been completed. The Government has notified all of the approximately 93 000 applicants on the vetting results.

About \$5 billion of subsidies have been approved so far for nearly 62 000 eligible retailers. The Government is now processing some appeal cases. It is expected that some more applications would be approved after review.

The Scheme's telephone hotline (1836 111) will cease operation at 6pm this Friday (June 12), and the enquiry email box of the Scheme (enquiry@retailsubsidy.hk) will continue to operate until June 30 (Tuesday). If applicants have any questions on the Scheme, they may send an email to enquiry@retailsubsidy.hk.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (June 8), no COVID-19 confirmed patient was discharged from hospital in the past 24 hours. So far, a total of 1 049 patients with confirmed or probable infections have been discharged.

At present, there are 636 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 188 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 55 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in nine hospitals, among which three patients are in critical condition (case numbers: 595, 1084 and 1092), and the remaining 52 patients are in stable condition.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

CHP investigates additional confirmed case of COVID-19 and follows up on cluster in Luk Chuen House

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) has announced that as of 4pm today (June 8), the CHP was investigating an additional confirmed case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 1 108 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 107 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported case announced today involves a 34-year-old woman who had a travel history during the incubation period. The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed case are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex.

Meanwhile, the CHP has been proactively conducting epidemiological investigations and carrying out preventive control measures in regard to the cluster in Luk Chuen House, Lek Yuen Estate, Sha Tin. As of 4pm today, 1 382 deep throat saliva samples had been collected in Luk Chuen House, among which eight samples need to be collected again owing to leakage, while 1 374 samples have had testing for COVID-19 completed. Except for the four confirmed cases announced on June 2 with positive results, other samples have tested negative.

The CHP is also following up with the residents in Luk Chuen House who have not yet returned their deep throat saliva samples. The CHP strongly appeals to those who have not got in touch with the CHP to contact the CHP personnel according to the medical test order issued and return their samples to the CHP as soon as possible for early testing.

Meanwhile, as of 4pm today, the CHP had collected and tested 2 115 samples for Luen Yuet House, Kwai Luen Estate, with no positive results.

The CHP again urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives to minimise the risk of infection. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contacting infected persons who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

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.