

Discrepancy in COVID- 19 Test Result SMS Message

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

To tie in with the "Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance Programme" of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health, the Hospital Authority (HA) contracted a test service vendor since July to arrange COVID-19 test and to enhance service recently by notifying negative test results via SMS message to the members of the public concerned. The HA was informed by the vendor today (November 25) that discrepancy of personal identification information was found during the SMS message handling process, resulting in the receipt of other people's negative test result.

Among the 2972 participants involved in the incident, six of them were tested positive, but negative SMS test result messages were sent to them wrongly by the system. Upon notification of the error, the HA has immediately contacted the CHP to follow up with the six patients concerned.

The HA spokesperson said, "All cases tested positive are reported to the CHP separately through an established mechanism. The CHP will inform the patients and arrange their admission for treatment. The HA has confirmed with the CHP that the six patients concerned have already been admitted under isolation treatment. Patient management is not affected and no patient has unduly stayed in the community."

The vendor has sent clarification SMS messages to the remaining recipients to amend the personal identification information and to reconfirm the test results. The vendor has verified that no other positive test results were notified as negative cases wrongly.

The HA is very concerned about the incident, which has been reported to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data. The HA has requested the vendor to review the system and to fix the error so as to avoid the occurrence of similar incident. The HA expresses apology to the members of the public affected.â€‹