

FHB responds to media enquiries concerning quarantine centres

In response to media enquiries regarding converting Jao Tsung-I Academy to a quarantine centre, a spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said the following today (February 1):

"In accordance with Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance (2020), in order to strengthen preventive measures and reduce the risk of transmission, the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health requires close contact of the confirmed cases without developing any symptoms to be under observation and quarantined. As such, there is a need for the Government to set up quarantine centres to accommodate these close contacts.

We must stress that those people who have been arranged to stay at quarantine centres are not confirmed or suspected infected patients. Instead, they are close contacts of confirmed cases and have not developed any symptoms.

Currently, the MacLehose Holiday Village and the Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village have turned into quarantine centres. As at 12 noon, February 1, nearly 60 accommodation units have been occupied. In light of the needs, the Po Leung Kuk Jockey Club Pak Tam Chung Holiday Camp will also be operated as a quarantine centre soon. Some 90 units are provided in the three quarantine centres.

There is an urgent need for the Government to provide more quarantine facilities as soon as possible. When searching for the sites, the Government has thoroughly considered whether the facilities meet the requirements for a quarantine centre including location, overall facilities (e.g. sanitary and ventilation facilities), environment, the possible impact to the residents nearby as well as their availability for such use within a short period of time. Suitable sites meeting the aforesaid requirements are limited. It is also very difficult to identify suitable facilities as quarantine centres.

Located on the hill, the Jao Tsung-I Academy is relatively distanced from residential area. Its overall facilities, including health and ventilation facilities, meet relevant requirements. The facility can also be converted into a quarantine centre which can commence operation at the soonest. Therefore, the Government considers it suitable for use as a quarantine centre.

The operation of the whole quarantine centre will adopt the mode of independent accommodation with security and healthcare staff on duty round the clock. Transfer service for leaving and entering the centre will be provided to people under quarantine, who will not take part in any community activities. Entry into and departure from the quarantine centre are not allowed without written permission of health personnel. Designated officers

will be responsible for daily care of people staying in quarantine centres. Quarantine centres have well developed quarantine measures to ensure hygienic condition, regular disinfection and proper waste management. The operation of the quarantine centres would also follow the Infection Control Guidelines, including that the staff members of the quarantine centres should adhere to personal infection control measures. In light of the operational needs, the activity area and in-and-out routes of the working staff and those required to be quarantined are segregated in the quarantine centre with a view to safeguarding public health.

As such, we sincerely hope that members of the public could understand the reasons for the Government to use the Jao Tsung-I Academy as a quarantine centre. The Government will ensure that all quarantine centres will comply with the stringent operational requirements."