

Hospital Authority announces incident concerning test of specimens collected at test centre

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (March 21) announced an incident concerning the test of specimens collected at a test centre:

The HA has established temporary test centres at the AsiaWorld-Expo and North Lantau Hospital yesterday (March 20). People arriving in Hong Kong with symptoms of upper respiratory symptoms will be sent to the centres for a viral test, and to wait for the laboratory results. Healthcare staff will arrange the transfer of patients with positive test results to public hospitals for isolation and treatment. As for those who have negative test results, they can return to their residence and continue their home quarantine for 14 days.

The HA laboratory at Queen Mary Hospital was responsible for testing seven specimens collected from the test centre at AsiaWorld Expo. The repeat test conducted in the early morning today found four specimens having different results from the preliminary results obtained last evening.

Two people who had returned directly to their registered residence tested positive for COVID-19 in the repeat test. The HA has immediately reported the cases to the Centre for Health Protection. The two patients have been transferred to hospitals for isolation treatment and are in stable condition now.

Meanwhile, the other two people who had been waiting for the results in the test centre at AsiaWorld-Expo were found to have negative test results for COVID-19 in the repeat test. They were informed of the results and have returned to their residence to continue their home quarantine for 14 days.

The laboratory concerned has preliminarily reviewed the workflow of the laboratory and believed that the four samples might have been swapped during the process. The infection risk of the cases concerned has been assessed and the laboratory test workflow has been reviewed to further enhance the integrity of the test reports.

The HA apologised for the inconvenience caused to the people concerned, while the laboratory test workflow and results disclosure arrangement will be reviewed and streamlined in due course. The HA also expressed gratitude to all staff members from the departments and backend support units in setting up the temporary test centres within a such a short time.