

Hospital Authority continues to transfer patients to private hospitals

While the COVID-19 epidemic situation recently shows some signs of stability, the number of hospitalised patients in public hospitals remains high at the current juncture. The Hospital Authority (HA) will continue to transfer different patients to receive medical services at private hospitals, with a view to alleviating the pressure on the public healthcare system and resuming the service level of non-emergency services as early as possible when situation allows.

Following an earlier meeting between the Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, and the representatives of the Hong Kong Private Hospitals Association, all 13 private hospitals provided 364 beds at the initial stage, of which the number can be gradually brought up to around 1 000 depending on the actual demand. According to the latest arrangement between the HA and private hospitals, at least 428 hospital beds have now been made available (see Annex).

The HA expressed gratitude to private hospitals for rendering assistance by receiving more than 1 200 patients from public hospitals. The HA will continue to maintain close liaison with private hospitals in implementing the anti-epidemic initiatives under the Public-Private Partnership, such as offering medical support in holding centres and providing teleconsultation and drug delivery services to COVID-19 patients.

Professor Lo said, "I am grateful to private hospitals for supporting the HA's work over the past few weeks and helping the teams of public hospitals to sail through the difficult times. As it is now a crucial juncture when the epidemic situation is turning stable, I hope that private hospitals will continue their close collaboration with the HA to resume normal public healthcare services as soon as possible and jointly safeguard public health."

The HA urged patients and their family members to co-operate with the transfer arrangements. Public hospitals will conduct a professional evaluation to ensure that a patient is suitable for transfer to private hospitals before making the arrangement. Patients only need to pay at a level equivalent to the charges of HA services for their stay at private hospitals or usage of medical services specified in the transfer arrangement. For those patients who are eligible for medical fee waiver, they will still be able to enjoy such waiver as in the case of using HA services.