

Hospital Authority strengthens its services to provide continuous support to COVID-19 patients

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) announced today (January 27) that in order to align with the government's cancellation of issuing isolation orders from next Monday (January 30), respective medical units will strengthen their services and continue to support COVID-19 patients.

The HA spokesman said, "After the concerned arrangement comes into effect, some infected patients may seek consultation in the General Out-patient Clinics (GOPCs). The HA has strengthened its manpower to cope with the possible increase in service demand. The HA Emergency Operation Command will closely monitor the situation and flexibly deploy resources to meet service demands so as to support necessary patients."

GOPC services and enquiry hotline

All GOPCs of the HA, including the seven Designated Clinics for COVID-19 confirmed cases and the GOPCs that had suspended some services earlier will resume normal out-patient clinic service starting from next Monday. The HA will reserve more quotas for patients with episodic diseases including COVID-19 patients in order to strengthen support to relevant patients. GOPCs will reserve certain quotas for high-risk confirmed patients (including the elderly, children aged five or below, women at 28 or more weeks of pregnancy, and immunocompromised patients) to make appointments through the following ways:

1. using the COVID-19 Care Booking (GOPC) function of the "HA Go" mobile app or seven "Care Booking Line" to book an appointment (Annex);
2. using the GOPC Telephone Appointment System to book an appointment, and the elderly appointment quota will be allocated for elderly patients according to the information provided;
3. the HA enquiry hotline 1836 115 will continue to provide assistance for patients, including the referral of confirmed patients who are in need of GOPCs for further treatment.

Other confirmed patients can make appointments through the "Book GOPC" function in the "HA Go" mobile app or the GOPC Telephone Appointment System.

Accident and Emergency (A&E) services

The HA will closely monitor the situation of every A&E department in public hospitals and arrange additional manpower to cope with the service

demand when necessary. The HA urges confirmed patients with mild symptoms or lower risk to consult private doctors who can prescribe COVID-19 oral drugs, so as to alleviate the pressure on the A&E or GOPCs services. Please refer to the list of private doctors through the hyperlink:
www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/tp_pd_antiviral.pdf.

Chinese Medicine services

Confirmed patients can also seek consultations at the Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres (CMCTRs) in the 18 districts. The HA will closely monitor the service demand and will mobilise resources to strengthen services when necessary. For the arrangement of the CMCTRs, please visit the link below: cmk.ha.org.hk/index.

Visiting arrangement

Starting on next Wednesday (February 1), all visitors can be arranged for a two-hour visit daily, except in isolation wards, according to the visiting sessions and time of each ward without a prior appointment. Subject to the situation in the ward, up to two visitors can enter the ward to visit the patient at the same time. An exchange of visitors is allowed with a maximum of three visitors. All visitors must provide a nucleic acid test negative result obtained within 48 hours prior to the visit with a view to protecting patients and reducing the risk of viral transmission. They have to strictly comply with the infection control measures, such as wearing surgical masks and undergoing temperature checks. Visitors who have recovered from COVID-19, if they could provide relevant proof or documents of infection and recovery, are exempted from the above testing requirement within three months from the specimen collection date of positive test result.

Hospital fee arrangement

Eligible Persons (EP) who are infected will be charged according to the rate applicable for EP when attending GOPCs, CMCTRs or public hospitals. For Non-eligible Persons (NEP) who attended an A&E or were admitted into hospitals for urgent treatment and services, they will be charged according to the rate applicable to the NEP regardless of whether they are infected. If COVID-19 oral drugs are prescribed in the treatment process, the NEP are also required to pay for the relevant drugs.

"The HA will fully cooperate with the Government's policies and closely monitor the service needs of different medical units to ensure that confirmed patients can receive treatment promptly. The HA will continue to adjust services according to the situation to take care of other patients in need," the HA spokesman added.