

Public hospitals to stay vigilant to combat next wave of epidemic

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Amid a number of local confirmed cases of COVID-19 with unknown source of infection, the risk of community outbreak has escalated. In accordance with the principle of suppress and lift, the Hospital Authority (HA) will enhance infection control measures to combat the next wave of epidemic and appeals for the understanding and cooperation from members of the public.

"Public hospitals shall start reinstating the 'Triage and Test Centres' of Accident and Emergency Departments (A&E) tomorrow (July 8) at appropriate locations within the hospitals. Suspected cases with stable condition will be tested and wait at designated area for the test results, while being segregated from other patients of the A&E," the HA spokesperson said.

"For isolation facilities, the HA shall defer some of scheduled annual maintenance works to ensure sufficient first-tier isolation facilities to admit suspected and confirmed COVID-19 patients. Public hospitals will also review the readiness of the second-tier isolation wards for possible admission of recovering patients with stable condition."

While non-emergency services in public hospitals have gradually resumed earlier, the HA will closely monitor the latest development of the epidemic and the operation of public hospitals. The pace of service resumption will be adjusted as appropriate to reduce the flow of people within the hospitals.

"The HA has also reviewed the current stockpile of personal protective equipment which is estimated to be adequate for around three months' usage. The HA will continue to procure the required personal protective equipment, drugs and test kits."

In view of the outbreak in an old aged home in the community, the HA will suspend the special visiting arrangement implemented earlier in non-acute hospitals beginning this Thursday (July 9) to minimise the flow of people within hospitals and the infection risks of inpatients. Meanwhile, hospitals will continue to make compassionate arrangements and video-visiting as far as practicable.

The spokesperson reminded all healthcare staff again to stay vigilant. When receiving or attending suspected and confirmed patients, they must strictly follow the infection control guidelines and wear appropriate personal protective equipment. Members of the public should maintain good hygiene habits by wearing masks and practising hand hygiene.

The HA will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to prudently monitor the latest development and fight the epidemic with its

best efforts. The HA will also inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.