

S for Health inspects HA facilities to see service enhancement measures during Lunar New Year (with photos)

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, inspected the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department of Kwong Wah Hospital as well as the Robert Black General Out-patient Clinic (GOPC) this morning (February 6), to get a better grasp of the array of measures taken by the Hospital Authority (HA) in enhancing service provision during the Lunar New Year.

Accompanied by the Chief Executive of the HA, Dr Tony Ko, Professor Lo; the Under Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee; and the Commissioner for Primary Healthcare, Dr Pang Fei-chau, received briefings by the healthcare personnel on the daily operation of the A&E Department and the GOPC, and learnt about the measures adopted by the HA to cope with anticipated huge service demand during and after the long holiday of the Lunar New Year. Such measures include increasing the GOPC consultation quota by 25 per cent, opening additional GOPCs (from 14 to 18), and providing 1 800 government-subsidised out-patient consultation quotas at the Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres across 18 districts during the holiday.

Professor Lo said, "We understand that quite a number of private clinics, family doctors and Chinese medicine practitioners in the community will not provide service during the Lunar New Year. To minimise the impact of service demand surge on the public healthcare system, the Health Bureau has collated information of private hospitals, healthcare facilities, family doctors and Chinese medicine clinics which will be in operation during the holiday across the city. The information (including addresses, phone numbers and operation hours) of the relevant hospitals and clinics have been uploaded to an [online portal](#) for public reference in collaboration with the Spatial Data Office of the Development Bureau and the Lands Department. Such a move aims to enable citizens in need to look for suitable hospitals or clinics for medical treatment. Citizens can also simply get access to this online portal via the [HA webpage](#) as well as the mobile applications of eHealth and 'HA Go'. According to the information on hand, some 100 private hospitals, clinics and healthcare facilities, as well as over 40 Chinese medicine clinics will operate during the long holiday of the Lunar New Year."

Professor Lo chatted with patients at the Robert Black GOPC. A number of patients highly praised the services provided by the HA and the professionalism of its medical staff. Two of them mentioned that they made their appointments via "HA Go" this morning and that they appreciated the high efficiency of public health services. Professor Lo was pleased to learn that HA services are well received by the public. "I would like to express my gratitude to all healthcare personnel for holding fast to their duty during the Lunar New Year to provide professional and efficient healthcare services to the citizens and to safeguard their health."

The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health announced on January 11 that Hong Kong has entered the winter influenza season and COVID-19 cases are continuously recorded. As indicated by the latest surveillance data, there are subsiding signs of positive rate of influenza viral tests and relevant hospital admissions over the last two weeks, but intermittent fluctuations of the relevant situation cannot be ruled out. Moreover, it is expected that there will be more respiratory tract infection cases in Hong Kong given that the public may likely go for more social gatherings and travel during the Lunar New Year holiday.

Professor Lo appealed to members of the public, especially the high-risk groups such as the elderly and children, to get vaccinated against influenza and COVID-19 as early as possible, so as to lower the risks of severe illnesses and deaths. In addition, high-risk groups should wear surgical masks in public areas. Citizens are also advised to wear surgical masks on public transport or in crowded places. Persons who have respiratory tract infection symptoms should wear surgical masks and avoid going to work or school with a view to reducing transmission risk, even if the symptoms are mild. They should also attend medical consultation as soon as possible.



