

Secretary for Health expresses gratitude to private hospitals for assisting anti-epidemic efforts

The Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, expressed gratitude to private hospitals for providing more hospital beds in a gradual manner to receive patients referred from the Hospital Authority (HA). The move will enable the HA to focus its resources in combating the COVID-19 epidemic more effectively and team up with private hospitals in securing public health.

The number of daily new cases in Hong Kong remains high, in four-digit figures, recently, and the overall number of hospitalised patients is on a continuous rise. In view of the epidemic development, Professor Lo, together with the Under Secretary for Health, Dr Libby Lee, as well as colleagues from the HA and the Department of Health, met with representatives from the Hong Kong Private Hospitals Association yesterday (July 26). He invited private hospitals to provide more hospital beds for the HA to transfer suitable patients to receive treatment at private hospitals, thereby alleviating the pressure on the public healthcare services.

Professor Lo said, "I am pleased to note that the Hong Kong Private Hospitals Association has shown support for the appeal. All 13 private hospitals are willing to provide a total of 364 hospital beds, including those for COVID-19 patients and non-COVID-19 patients, at the initial stage to address the HA's immediate needs. Depending on the actual demand, the number of hospital beds can be gradually brought up to around 1 000. The HA will commence discussions with the private hospitals on the plan for matching one to three private hospitals with each HA cluster for receiving patients referred from public hospitals, so as to ensure effective use of hospital bed resources and the early transfer of patients for receiving medical services.

"Given the signs of a rebound in epidemic situation, it is essential to the lives and safety of our citizens for us to maintain the operation of the public healthcare system. We are grateful to the private hospitals for rendering assistance at this critical juncture and making contributions to Hong Kong's battle against the epidemic."