

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (April 6), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 95 patients (37 male and 58 female, aged three to 78) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of COVID-19. Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

There are 759 patients under isolation currently. So far, 216 patients who had COVID-19 confirmed or probable infection have been discharged upon recovery.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

CHP investigates 24 additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (April 6), the CHP was investigating 24 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 915 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 914 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases announced today involve 14 males and 10 females aged between 3 and 64. Among them, 18 had travel history during the incubation period and three are overseas students. The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex.

The CHP urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contacting infected persons, who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "In view of the proliferation of the

disease and continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

The CHP will report the cases to the World Health Organization, the National Health Commission, the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, relevant health authorities and the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has set up hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 4pm today, a total of 83 755 calls were received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled,

performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;

- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing.

Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and

- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

Opening remarks by STH on transport at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following is the opening remarks (English translation) by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, on transport at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee today (April 6):

Honourable Chairperson,

Today, I would like to brief Members on our work on land, marine and air transport in the new financial year.

For railways, Tuen Ma Line Phase 1 was commissioned on February 14 this year. The remaining works of the Shatin to Central Link is in full swing. The "Tai Wai to Hung Hom Section" and "Hung Hom to Admiralty Section" are expected to commission by the end of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022 respectively. We will continue to implement the new railway projects recommended under the Railway Development Strategy 2014, and will invite the MTR Corporation Limited to commence detailed planning and design for the Tung Chung Line Extension, Tuen Mun South Extension and Northern Link in the coming year. The Government will consult the public on the new railway schemes after confirming their details.

In respect of major road infrastructures, the construction of the TM-CLKL Northern Connection is anticipated to be completed by end 2020 at the earliest. Upon commissioning, the travelling time between Northwest New Territories and Lantau will be significantly reduced, which will not only help alleviate the traffic load of North Lantau Highway, Lantau Link and Tuen Mun Road, but also provide an alternative route to the Hong Kong International Airport.

The Route 6 will provide an important road link between West Kowloon, Kai Tak and Tseung Kwan O. The works of the Tseung Kwan O – Lam Tin Tunnel and the Central Kowloon Route under the project are in full swing. Upon

commissioning of the entire Route 6, it is estimated that the journey time during peak hours between Tseung Kwan O Town Centre and Yau Ma Tei Interchange along the Route 6 will be substantially reduced from about 65 minutes now to about 12 minutes.

The Trunk Road T2 and Cha Kwo Ling Tunnel commenced construction in November 2019 for target commissioning of the entire Route 6 in 2026.

Due to unforeseen events including the novel coronavirus epidemic in recent months, the supply chain of construction materials and installations have been affected and the workforce for site works has been reduced. We will continue to closely monitor the progress of works and assess the impacts on the overall works projects.

In the 2019 Policy Address, it was announced that a Special Scheme would be launched under the Universal Accessibility Programme for retrofitting lifts at walkways in or connecting to estates under the Tenants Purchase Scheme and Buy or Rent Option Scheme, and public rental housing estates with properties divested under the Hong Kong Housing Authority. The Highways Department will consult District Councils on the Special Scheme starting from the second quarter of this year.

In terms of public transport, the Government has enhanced the Public Transport Fare Subsidy Scheme since January 2020 to further alleviate the fare burden of commuters. We will also provide Special Helping Measures for outlying island ferry routes starting from the second quarter of this year in order to reduce the burden of fare increases. In addition, the Government continues to enhance the operation safety of franchised buses. Among the 45 recommendations put forward by the relevant Independent Review Committee, 43 have been implemented or are being implemented, with some of them becoming on-going measures.

On the use of roads, to maximise the efficiency of limited road space, the Government will progressively take forward various "Smart Mobility" initiatives, including the installation of the new generation on-street parking meters, thereby providing real-time information on vacant on-street metered parking spaces and supporting the remote payment of parking meter fees; the preparation for implementing Free-flow Tolling System at government tolled tunnels and the Tsing Sha Control Area, thereby enabling motorists to use toll tags (in-vehicle units) to pay tolls; the development of a Traffic Data Analytics System for more accurate assessment of traffic conditions and provision of real-time suggestions, etc.

To encourage enterprises or organisations to conduct research and applications on vehicle-related innovation and technology, we have earmarked around \$1 billion for setting up a Smart Traffic Fund which is expected to commence operation in 2020-21.

Separately, to reduce the cost of using government tolled tunnels and Control Areas incurred by the public, public transport operators and transport trades, we plan to introduce amendments to the relevant subsidiary

legislation in the second quarter this year so as to implement the initiative in respect of the toll-free arrangement for the subsea tunnel connecting Tuen Mun and Chek Lap Kok and the Tseung Kwan O – Lam Tin Tunnel upon commissioning, as well as the toll waiver for the Lantau Link and the Tseung Kwan O Tunnel when the two new tunnels are commissioned respectively.

We are taking forward the legislative amendment work to abolish the embarkation fee for cross-boundary ferry passengers, with a view to bringing it into effect in 2020.

In respect of marine transport, the Transport Department completed the open tender assessment of the "Central – Hung Hom" and "water taxi" ferry services in March this year. The selected operator has started gearing up for the services, which are expected to commence operation in the second and fourth quarter of this year respectively. In addition, we plan to submit the legislative amendments on enhancing the regulatory regime on pleasure vessels to the Legislative Council later with a view to strengthening their safety requirements.

As for the maritime industry, the Government will continue to bolster the development of high value-added maritime services. We have introduced the relevant Amendment Bills to provide a tax exemption for qualifying ship lessors, and offer a 50 per cent profits tax concession to qualifying ship leasing managers and eligible marine insurance businesses.

The Government also plans to introduce tax concessionary measures for maritime commercial principals such as ship managers, ship brokers and ship agents, to encourage them to establish a presence in Hong Kong.

As for the logistics industry, the Government will introduce a pilot subsidy scheme this year for providing a subsidy to qualified third party logistics service providers on a matching basis by injecting \$345 million; each enterprise may be granted subsidies up to \$1 million; it is expected that around 300 enterprises can benefit from it. In addition, the Government will release by phases two port back-up sites at Kwai Chung and Tsing Yi respectively through public tender for developing multi-storey port back-up and modern logistics facilities.

As far as aviation is concerned. Despite that cargo traffic was relatively weak in the first two months of the year due to the impact of the epidemic, we remain committed to maintaining its leadership status as an international aviation and cargo hub. We will continue to support Airport Authority Hong Kong in enhancing its long-term competitiveness, including the ongoing development on intermodal connectivity, taking forward the SKYCITY, the expansion of the express air cargo terminal, the development of the premium logistics centre at Kwo Lo Wan, and its continued efforts in achieving various international accreditations, etc.

Honourable Chairperson, I will be happy to answer policy-related questions from Members. My colleagues, the controlling officers and other colleagues will answer questions pertaining to operations and the use of

financial resources.

Opening remarks by STH on housing at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following is the opening remarks (English translation) by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, on housing at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee this afternoon (April 6):

Chairman,
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Housing is a livelihood issue of greatest concern to the current-term Government. Based on the "supply-led" and "flexibility" principles under the Long Term Housing Strategy, the Government will continue to increase public and private housing supply through a multi-pronged strategy. I am going to briefly introduce the following measures.

According to the projection announced in the Long Term Housing Strategy Annual Progress Report 2019, the total housing supply target for the 10-year period from 2020-21 to 2029-30 will be 430 000 units. According to the public/private split of new housing supply of 70:30, the public housing supply target will be 301 000 units, comprising 210 000 public rental housing (PRH)/Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme (GSH) units and 91 000 other Subsidised Sale Flats (SSFs).

Assuming that all sites identified as of now can be smoothly delivered on time for housing development, the estimated public housing production for the 10-year period from 2020-21 to 2029-30 is about 272 000 units, which is 24 000 units more than that for the 10-year period from 2019-20 to 2028-29 as announced in 2018. The extent of the shortfall has narrowed from 67 000 units as projected in 2018 to 29 000 units.

The Government will continue to spare no efforts in increasing the short, medium and long term housing land supply through a series of measures, including pressing ahead with various planned initiatives such as rezoning existing sites and carrying out major development projects. Furthermore, the Chief Executive announced in the 2019 Policy Address a series of new measures to increase land supply, such as invoking the Lands Resumption Ordinance and other applicable ordinances to resume private land for development of public housing or Starter Homes for Hong Kong Residents (SH) project, and the concrete implementation of the Land Sharing Pilot Scheme. These measures help increase the land supply for public housing development. Relevant departments will strive to implement these new initiatives.

In view of the current tough economic situation, the Financial Secretary has introduced a series of counter-cyclical measures, which include paying one month's rent for lower-income tenants living in the public rental units of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) and the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS). The estimated expenditure of the proposed measure is about \$1,829 million. It is estimated that the HA and the HKHS will implement the rent payment about one month to one and a half months after the passage of the Appropriation Bill and a total of around 790 000 tenants will benefit.

Furthermore, the 2019 Policy Address proposed that the HA make active preparation to accelerate the sale of the unsold flats in the Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) estates, with a view to further meeting the home ownership aspirations of PRH tenants. Currently, there are around 41 000 unsold flats in the 39 TPS estates. We will, at a later time, consult the Legislative Council Panel on Housing regarding how to accelerate the sale of these flats, and put up concrete recommendations on sales arrangements for HA's consideration in the second quarter or third quarter of 2020.

As regards SH, the Government invited public tenders for a private residential site on Anderson Road, Kwun Tong, on March 20 for implementing the second SH pilot project. The tender invitation will close on May 15 this year. According to the land sale conditions, the Government will randomly select no less than 1 000 SH units from the completed residential units built by the developer. The SH units will be offered for sale at 80 per cent of the prevailing market prices to eligible applicants.

In the aspect of increasing public housing development, the HA is exploring the feasibility of redeveloping individual factory estates as appropriate for public housing use, particularly to increase the supply of PRH units, taking into account individual site conditions and arrangements. The HA has progressively commenced the respective preliminary assessments, which are expected to be completed gradually in end of this year. The HA will announce the results and recommendations as appropriate.

With regards to the promotion of transitional housing, the Task Force on Transitional Housing under the Transport and Housing Bureau has been working closely with community organisations to facilitate completion of projects to increase supply. At present, the Task Force has identified sufficient sites for the provision of 10 000 transitional housing units in the coming three years. The Government is assessing the feasibility to develop transitional housing on a number of government, institution or community sites that have no development plan in the short term, with a view to meeting the further increase of the supply target of transitional housing to 15 000 units for the coming three years, as announced by the Chief Executive in mid-January this year. The relevant organisations will announce details of individual projects at suitable junctures.

We are grateful for the Legislative Council's approval of the funding allocation of \$5 billion last month to set up a Funding Scheme to support the implementation of Transitional Housing Projects by Non-government Organisations. The Government expects to formally launch the Funding Scheme in mid-2020. Furthermore, the Task Force will continue to provide assistance

and offer advice to organisations taking into account the needs of individual projects.

Furthermore, to alleviate the hardship faced by the families waiting for PRH and those living in unpleasant environments, the Government will, on a trial basis, provide cash allowance to eligible General Applicant households who are not living in public housing, not receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and have been waiting for PRH for more than three years, until they are offered the first PRH allocation. The Government is working out the details of the trial scheme for the provision of a cash allowance, with a view to launching the scheme in the second half of next year. Before the introduction of the trial scheme, the Community Care Fund will put forward two rounds of "one-off living subsidy" for the low-income households not living in PRH and not receiving the CSSA in the financial year of 2020-21.

The Transport and Housing Bureau will also set up a Working Group, which will engage a consultant to examine the feasibility and, if so, viable options for implementing tenancy control on subdivided units (SDUs) as well as examine various subjects relevant to SDU tenancy control. We aim to complete the consultancy studies by the first half of next year.

Chairman, I am pleased to answer policy-related questions from Members, while the Controlling Officers and my other colleagues would respond to those questions relating to implementation matters and the use of financial resources.

[Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held on April 14](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held on April 14:

Tender date	: April 14, 2020
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q2016
Issue date	: April 15, 2020
Maturity date	: July 15, 2020
Tenor	: 91 days
Amount on offer	: HK\$61,271 MN

Tender date : April 14, 2020
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H2045
Issue date : April 15, 2020
Maturity date : October 14, 2020
Tenor : 182 days
Amount on offer : HK\$16,000 MN

Tender date : April 14, 2020
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Y2088
Issue date : April 15, 2020
Maturity date : April 14, 2021
Tenor : 364 days
Amount on offer : HK\$3,000 MN