

Update on cluster of Influenza A cases in Kwai Chung Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of patients infected with Influenza A in a male psychiatric ward, the spokesperson for Kwai Chung Hospital (KCH) gave the following update today (August 19):

One more patient, aged 59, in the ward presented with respiratory symptoms. The appropriate viral test was arranged for the patient and the test result was positive for Influenza A. The patient has since recovered and been discharged.

Infection control measures have been stepped up according to established guidelines. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The case has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Fraudulent website and phishing email related to Hong Leong Bank Berhad

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Hong Leong Bank Berhad on fraudulent website and phishing email, which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on [the HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the website concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the website should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

Three illegal workers jailed

Three Vietnamese illegal workers were jailed by Shatin and Fanling Magistrates' Courts on August 16 and 17.

During a joint operation codenamed "Champion" conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD) and the Hong Kong Police Force on July 9, enforcement officers raided a massage shop in Wan Chai. A female Vietnamese, aged 29, was arrested while working as a masseuse.

Furthermore, during operation "Twilight" conducted on August 14, ImmD investigators raided a commercial building in Sheung Wan. A female Vietnamese, aged 43, was arrested while working as a cleaning worker.

In addition, during operation "Twilight" conducted on August 15, ImmD investigators raided a restaurant in Central. A male Vietnamese, aged 52, was arrested while working as an odd-job worker. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant. An employer suspected of employing the illegal worker was also arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The three illegal workers were charged at Shatin and Fanling Magistrates' Courts on August 16 and 17 with taking employment after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. They pleaded guilty to the charge and were sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. Meanwhile, one of the illegal workers was also charged with one count of using a forged Hong Kong identity card and one count of being in possession a false instrument. She was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment for each count. All sentences are to run concurrently for a total of 15 months' imprisonment. In addition, one illegal worker was charged with one count of using a forged Hong Kong identity card. He was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment with part of the sentence to run consecutively for a total of 18 months' imprisonment.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases. Under the prevailing laws, it is an offence to use or possess a forged Hong Kong identity card or a Hong Kong identity card related to another person. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum penalty of a \$100,000 fine and up to 10 years' imprisonment. It is also an offence to make, possess or use false instruments. Upon conviction, offenders are liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening of vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threat and coercion in the recruitment phase, and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent intervention, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.

CHP notified of human case of avian influenza A(H5N6) in Beijing

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (August 19) received notification of an additional human case of avian influenza A(H5N6) in Beijing from the National Health Commission, and again urged the public to maintain strict personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel.

The case involved a 59-year-old female from Beijing. She was hospitalised on August 11. She is now in a critical condition.

From 2014 to date, 24 human cases of avian influenza A(H5N6) have been reported by the Mainland health authorities.

"All novel influenza A infections, including H5N6, are notifiable infectious diseases in Hong Kong," the spokesman said.

Travellers to the Mainland or other affected areas must avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms. They should be alert to the presence of backyard poultry when visiting relatives and friends. They should also avoid purchasing live or freshly slaughtered poultry, and avoid touching poultry/birds or their droppings. They should strictly observe personal and hand hygiene when visiting any place with live poultry.

Travellers returning from affected areas should consult a doctor promptly if symptoms develop, and inform the doctor of their travel history for prompt diagnosis and treatment of potential diseases. It is essential to tell the doctor if they have seen any live poultry during travel, which may imply possible exposure to contaminated environments. This will enable the doctor to assess the possibility of avian influenza and arrange necessary investigations and appropriate treatment in a timely manner.

While local surveillance, prevention and control measures are in place, the CHP will remain vigilant and work closely with the World Health Organization and relevant health authorities to monitor the latest developments.

The CHP's Port Health Office conducts health surveillance measures at all boundary control points. Thermal imaging systems are in place for body temperature checks on inbound travellers. Suspected cases will be immediately referred to public hospitals for follow-up.

The display of posters and broadcasting of health messages in departure and arrival halls as health education for travellers is under way. The travel industry and other stakeholders are regularly updated on the latest information.

The public should maintain strict personal, hand, food and environmental hygiene and take heed of the advice below if handling poultry:

- Avoid touching poultry, birds, animals or their droppings;
- When buying live chickens, do not touch them and their droppings. Do not blow at their bottoms. Wash eggs with detergent if soiled with faecal matter and cook and consume the eggs immediately. Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling chickens and eggs;
- Eggs should be cooked well until the white and yolk become firm. Do not eat raw eggs or dip cooked food into any sauce with raw eggs. Poultry should be cooked thoroughly. If there is pinkish juice running from the cooked poultry or the middle part of its bone is still red, the poultry should be cooked again until fully done;
- Wash hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, before handling food or eating, and after going to the toilet, touching public installations or equipment such as escalator handrails, elevator control panels or door knobs, or when hands are dirtied by

- respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing; and
- Wear a mask if fever or respiratory symptoms develop, when going to a hospital or clinic, or while taking care of patients with fever or respiratory symptoms.

The public may visit the CHP's pages for more information: the [avian influenza](#) page, the weekly [Avian Influenza Report](#), [global statistics and affected areas](#) of avian influenza, the [Facebook Page](#) and the [YouTube Channel](#).

Composite Interest Rate: End of July 2019

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (Monday) the composite interest rate at the end of July 2019. (Note 1)

The composite interest rate, which is a measure of the average cost of funds of banks, decreased by 1 basis point to 0.94 per cent at the end of July 2019, from 0.95 per cent at the end of June 2019 (see Chart 1 in the Annex). The decrease in composite interest rate reflected decreases in the weighted funding cost for both deposits and interbank funds during the month (see Chart 2 in the Annex). (Note 2)

The historical data of the composite interest rate from the end of the fourth quarter of 2003 to the end of July 2019 are available in the Monthly Statistical Bulletin on the HKMA website (www.hkma.gov.hk). The next data release is scheduled for 19 September 2019 and will provide the composite interest rate at the end of August 2019.

Note 1: The composite interest rate is a weighted average interest rate of all Hong Kong dollar interest-rate-sensitive liabilities, which include deposits from customers, amounts due to banks, negotiable certificates of deposit and other debt instruments, and all other liabilities that do not involve any formal payment of interest but the values of which are sensitive to interest rate movements (such as Hong Kong dollar non-interest bearing demand deposits) on the books of banks. Data from retail banks, which account for about 90 per cent of the total customers' deposits in the banking sector, are used in the calculation. It should be noted that the composite interest rate represents only average interest expenses. There are various other costs involved in the making of a loan, such as operating costs (e.g. staff and rental expenses), credit cost and hedging cost, which are not covered by the composite interest rate.

Note 2: Since June 2019, the composite interest rate and weighted deposit rate have been calculated based on the new local "Interest rate risk in the banking book" (IRRBB) framework. As such, these figures are not strictly comparable with those of previous months.