

CHP investigates hand, foot and mouth disease outbreak in secondary school in Tseung Kwan O

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (October 19) investigating an outbreak of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) in a secondary school in Tseung Kwan O, and again urged the public, schools and institutions to maintain strict hand, personal and environmental hygiene.

The outbreak affected 20 male students, aged 12 to 14, who have developed fever, oral ulcers, rash and vesicles over hands or feet since September 25. All of them sought medical attention and none required hospitalisation. All patients are in a stable condition.

The stool specimen of an affected student tested positive for enterovirus (EV) upon laboratory testing.

Officers of the CHP have conducted a site visit to the school and advised the management on necessary infection control and preventive measures. The school has been put under medical surveillance. Investigations are ongoing.

"HFMD is common in children while adult cases may also appear. It is usually caused by enteroviruses (EVs) such as Coxsackie virus and EV71. It is clinically characterised by maculopapular rashes or vesicular lesions occurring on the palms, soles and other parts of the body such as the buttocks and thighs. Vesicular lesions and ulcers may also be found in the oral cavity. Sometimes patients present mainly with painful ulcers at the back of the mouth, namely herpangina, without rash on the hands or feet," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"HFMD occurs throughout the year. While the disease activity is usually higher from May to July, a smaller peak may also occur from October to December. As young children are more susceptible, parents should stay alert to their health. Institutional outbreaks may occur where HFMD can easily spread among young children with close contact," the spokesman added.

To prevent HFMD, members of the public, and especially the management of institutions, should take heed of the following preventive measures:

- Maintain good air circulation;
- Wash hands before meals and after going to the toilet or handling diapers or other stool-soiled materials;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly, especially when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal

and oral discharges properly;

- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as furniture, toys and commonly shared items with 1:99 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 99 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes, and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
- Use absorbent disposable towels to wipe away obvious contaminants such as respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, and then disinfect the surface and neighbouring areas with 1:49 diluted household bleach (mixing one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite with 49 parts of water), leave for 15 to 30 minutes and then rinse with water and keep dry. For metallic surfaces, disinfect with 70 per cent alcohol;
- Children who are ill should be kept out of school until their fever and rash have subsided and all the vesicles have dried and crusted;
- Avoid going to overcrowded places; and
- Parents should maintain close communication with schools to let them know the latest situation of the sick children.

The public may visit the CHP's page on [HFMD and EV71 infection](#) and [Public Health Advice for Play Facilities](#) for more information.

Meetings of Legislative Council and its Committees

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) and its Committees will hold 12 open meetings and a closed meeting during the week from October 22 to 26 in the LegCo Complex. Details of the meetings are available in the meeting schedule attached.

The information in the meeting schedule is subject to change. Please refer to the "LegCo Calendar" on the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk) for the latest details of meetings.

Members of the public are welcome to observe open meetings of LegCo and its Committees. Interested individuals and groups are advised to make advance booking of seats by calling the LegCo Secretariat at 3919 3399 during office hours. Members of the public can also listen to or watch all open meetings via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website.

Appointment to Process Review Panel for Securities and Futures Commission

The Government announced today (October 19) that the Financial Secretary, under the authority delegated by the Chief Executive, has appointed a new Chairman and six new members, as well as re-appointed four incumbent members of the Process Review Panel for the Securities and Futures Commission (PRP) for a term of two years from November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2020.

The new Chairman is Mr Lawrence Lee Kam-hung. The six new members are Mr Jeffrey Chan Lap-tak, Ms Dilys Chau Suet-fung, Ms Ivy Chua Suk-lin, Mr Vincent Chui Yik-chiu, Ms Margaret Kwan Wing-han and Mr Henry Lai Hin-wing. The four re-appointed members are Ms Ding Chen, Mr Chester Kwok Tun-ho, Mr Frederick Tsang Sui-cheong and Ms Nicole Yuen Shuk-kam.

The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, said, "I am grateful for the time and effort that the Chairman and members of the PRP have devoted to review and advise the Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) on the adequacy of its internal procedures and operational guidelines. I would like to express my gratitude in particular to Dr Moses Cheng Mo-chi for his exemplary leadership over the past six years, as well as the valuable advice and suggestions provided by him and other outgoing members, including Mr Clement Chan Kam-wing, Dr Hu Zhanghong, Ms Rosita Lee Pui-shan and Mr Robert Lee Wai-wang.

"The PRP comprises veterans of the financial services industry and other professional areas. I am confident that under the leadership of the new Chairman, the PRP will continue to play its vital role of assisting the SFC to exercise its regulatory power in a fair and consistent manner."

The PRP is an independent non-statutory panel established in November 2000 to review the operational procedures of the SFC and determine whether the SFC has followed its procedures in carrying out its work. This helps ensure that the SFC exercises its regulatory power in a fair and consistent manner. The membership comprises a good mix of knowledge, experience and expertise from relevant sectors.

In addition to advising the SFC on its operational procedures, the PRP submits to the Financial Secretary and publishes annual reports on its review and its observations and recommendations made regarding the SFC's internal processes and procedures.

The membership of the PRP with effect from November 1, 2018 is as follows:

Chairman

Mr Lawrence Lee Kam-hung

Members

Mr Jeffrey Chan Lap-tak
Ms Lena Chan
Ms Dilys Chau Suet-fung
Ms Ivy Chua Suk-lin
Mr Vincent Chui Yik-chiu
Ms Ding Chen
Ms Margaret Kwan Wing-han
Mr Chester Kwok Tun-ho
Mr Henry Lai Hin-wing
Dr Billy Mak Sui-choi
Mr Frederick Tsang Sui-cheong
Ms Nicole Yuen Shuk-kam

Ex-officio Members

The Chairman of the SFC
The Secretary for Justice or her representative

Business expectations for fourth quarter of 2018

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (October 19) the results of the Quarterly Business Tendency Survey for the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2018.

Business situation

For all surveyed sectors taken together, the proportion of respondents expecting their business situation to be better (14%) in Q4 2018 over Q3 2018 is slightly higher than that expecting it to be worse (12%).

When compared with the results of the Q3 2018 survey round, the proportion of respondents expecting a worse business situation in Q4 2018 as compared with the preceding quarter has increased to 12%, against the corresponding proportion of 8% in Q3 2018.

Analysed by sector, more respondents in the retail; accommodation and food services; information and communications; and financing and insurance sectors expect their business situation to be better in Q4 2018 as compared with Q3 2018, relative to those expecting a worse business situation. In the construction sector, however, significantly more respondents expect their

business situation to be worse, as compared to those expecting a better business situation.

A Government spokesman cautioned that the results of the survey should be interpreted with care. He said, "In this type of survey on expectations, the views collected in the survey are affected by the events in the community occurring around the time of enumeration, and it is difficult to establish precisely the extent to which respondents' perception of the future accords with the underlying trends." The enumeration period for this survey round was from September 4, 2018 to October 12, 2018.

Volume of business/output

Respondents in quite a number of the surveyed sectors expect their volume of business/output to increase on balance in Q4 2018 as compared with Q3 2018. In particular, more respondents in the retail; accommodation and food services; information and communications; transportation, storage and courier services; and financing and insurance sectors expect their volume of business/output to increase, as compared to those expecting it to decrease. On the other hand, more respondents in the manufacturing sector expect their volume of output to decrease, as compared to those expecting it to increase.

Employment

Respondents in most of the surveyed sectors expect their employment to increase on balance in Q4 2018 as compared with Q3 2018. More respondents in the real estate; transportation, storage and courier services; information and communications; accommodation and food services; retail; manufacturing; and financing and insurance sectors expect their employment to increase in Q4 2018 over Q3 2018.

Selling price/service charge

Respondents in most of the surveyed sectors expect their selling prices/service charges to remain broadly unchanged or to go up on balance in Q4 2018 as compared with Q3 2018. In particular, more respondents in the accommodation and food services sector and transportation, storage and courier services sector expect their selling prices/service charges to go up. On the other hand, more respondents in the construction sector expect the tender prices to go down, as compared to those expecting an increase in tender prices.

Further information

The survey gathers views on short-term business performance from the senior management of about 560 prominent establishments in various sectors in Hong Kong with a view to providing a quick reference, with minimum time lag, for predicting the short-term future economic performance of the local economy.

The survey covers 10 major sectors in Hong Kong, namely manufacturing;

construction; import/export trade and wholesale; retail; accommodation and food services (mainly covering services rendered by hotels and restaurants); transportation, storage and courier services; information and communications; financing and insurance; real estate; and professional and business services sectors.

Views collected in the survey refer only to those of respondents on their own establishments rather than those on the respective sectors they are engaged in, and are limited to the expected direction of quarter-to-quarter change (e.g. "up", "same" or "down") but not the magnitude of change. In collecting views on the quarter-to-quarter changes, if the variable in question is subject to seasonal variations, respondents are asked to provide the expected changes after excluding the normal seasonal variations.

Survey results are generally presented as "net balance", i.e. the difference between the percentage of respondents choosing "up" and that choosing "down". The percentage distribution of respondents among various response categories (e.g. "up", "same" and "down") reflects how varied their business expectations are. The "net balance", with its appropriate sign, indicates the direction of expected change in the variable concerned. A positive sign indicates a likely upward trend while a negative sign indicates a likely downward trend. However, the magnitude of the "net balance" reflects only the prevalence of optimism or pessimism, but not the magnitude of expected change, since information relating to such magnitude is not collected in the survey.

Furthermore, owing to sample size constraint, care should be taken in interpreting survey results involving a small percentage (e.g. less than 10%) of respondents in individual sectors.

Chart 1 shows the views on expected changes in business situation for the period Q4 2017 to Q4 2018.

Table 1 shows the net balances of views on expectations in respect of different variables for Q4 2018.

The survey results are published in greater detail in the "Report on Quarterly Business Tendency Survey, Q4 2018". Users can download the publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp300.jsp?productCode=B1110008).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Business Expectation Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7263 or email: business-prospects@censtatd.gov.hk).

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for July – September 2018

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for July – September 2018) released today (October 19) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.8% in July – September 2018, same as that in June – August 2018. The underemployment rate increased from 1.1% in June – August 2018 to 1.2% in July – September 2018.

Comparing July – September 2018 with June – August 2018, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) in different industry sectors varied, but were generally small in magnitude. Movements in the underemployment rate also varied, with a relatively notable increase observed in the foundation and superstructure works of the construction sector.

Total employment decreased by around 7 800 from 3 882 400 in June – August 2018 to 3 874 600 in July – September 2018. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 7 400 from 3 999 800 to 3 992 400.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) in July – September 2018 was 117 800, about the same as that in June – August 2018 (117 400). The number of underemployed persons increased by around 1 800 from 45 500 in June – August 2018 to 47 300 in July – September 2018.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, said, "Labour market stayed tight in July – September 2018, with the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate holding steady at 2.8%. Total employment sustained a solid growth on a year-on-year basis."

"When compared to the preceding three-month period, movements in unemployment rates varied across sectors, but were generally small in magnitude. On a year-on-year comparison to net out seasonal fluctuations, the unemployment situation improved in many major sectors, especially in the accommodation services, decoration, repair and maintenance for buildings, as well as information and communications sectors."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "Overall labour market conditions will likely remain favourable in the near term. Nonetheless, the Government will continue to monitor closely how the increasing external headwinds will affect the local labour market going forward."

On promoting youth employment, Dr Law noted that to encourage employers in hiring young people and to provide them with quality on-the-job training, the Labour Department (LD) expanded the scope of the Youth Employment and Training Programme on September 1 to cover part-time on-the-job training and

increased the maximum amount of monthly training allowance payable to employers who engage young people and provide them with on-the-job training from \$3,000 to \$4,000 (for a period of six to 12 months).

On large-scale job fairs, the LD will organise the New Opportunities-New Terrain Job Expo on October 25 and 26 at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Around 45 employers would participate, offering vacancies suitable for young people with post-secondary education. Moreover, the LD will organise the Job Fair for Middle-aged and Elderly Employment on November 15 and 16 at the Dragon Centre in Sham Shui Po. In addition, industry-based or district-based job fairs are regularly organised at the LD's industry-based recruitment centres and job centres located across the territory.

Further information

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were compiled from the findings of the continuous General Household Survey.

The survey for July – September 2018 covered a sample of some 25 000 households or 74 000 persons, selected in accordance with a scientifically designed sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong Kong.

Data on labour force characteristics were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the sampled households.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization.

Detailed analysis of labour force characteristics is given in the "Quarterly Report on General Household Survey" which is published four times a year. The latest issue of the publication contains statistics for the quarter April – June 2018 while the next issue covering the quarter July – September 2018 will be available by end-November 2018. Users can download this publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp200.jsp?productCode=B1050001).

For enquiries about labour force statistics, please contact the Household Statistics Analysis Section of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).