

## ArchSD to remove Old and Valuable Tree in Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens

A spokesman for the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) said today (August 30) that an Old and Valuable Tree (OVT) infected with Brown Root Rot Disease (BRRD) in the Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens will be removed on September 6 (Friday).

The concerned tree, a *Parkia javanica* around 23 metres tall, is listed on the Register of OVTs (registration number ARCHSD CW/28).

The tree was confirmed to be infected with BRRD in July 2023. Since then, the ArchSD has been, in accordance with the guidelines of the Tree Management Office (TMO) of the Development Bureau, strengthening maintenance works and conducting regular inspections to closely monitor the tree's health and structural condition. Mitigation measures have been taken, including crown cleaning and the application of fungicide. In spite of the ArchSD's maintenance efforts over the past year, the condition of the tree continued to deteriorate, as indicated by obvious signs of wood decay at the trunk base and roots, sparse crown density and severe withered branches. After assessment, it was confirmed that BRRD has caused irrecoverable damages to the tree. Due to the leaning of the tree, the ArchSD has installed cables to stabilise the trunk for the time being.

The OVT is located on a slope at the southern end of the Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens, adjacent to a pedestrian path and the carriageway of Garden Road. For the safety of pedestrians and vehicles, the ArchSD has proposed to remove the tree. The Urban Forestry Advisory Panel has been consulted on the proposal through the TMO, and the Central and Western District Council has been informed.

Appropriate ornamental plants will be replanted at the location concerned after the removal of the tree.

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## CHP reminds schools to stay vigilant against communicable diseases in new school year

â€‹The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (August 30) urged schools, parents and students to heighten

vigilance and adopt good personal and environmental hygiene to prevent the spread of communicable diseases as social contact among students in schools will increase when school resumes.

According to previous experience, the CHP expected that outbreaks of respiratory infections and hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) in schools may increase after the start of the new school year and reminded schools to stay vigilant and take preventive measures to guard against possible outbreaks. Moreover, in view of the increase of imported Dengue Fever (DF) cases this year coupled with detection of local DF cases, schools should take active mosquito prevention measures.

#### A. Respiratory infections

The latest surveillance data of the CHP showed that some respiratory pathogens remained active in the community. For children, laboratory surveillance data from the Hospital Authority (HA) over the past eight weeks (as of August 24) revealed that the detection rate of *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) continued to increase. The latest rate accounts for 12 per cent and 8 per cent respectively, which have been increased from around 10 per cent and 6 per cent respectively compared to eight weeks ago but are in line with previous seasonal trends. In general, rhinovirus/enterovirus continued to have the highest activity level amongst respiratory pathogens, accounting for more than 15 per cent of the paediatric respiratory specimens received by the HA, though the proportion in recent days has started to drop.

For COVID-19 and seasonal influenza (SI), the activity of COVID-19 which had increased since late June this year showed signs of decline recently. The weekly detection rate of respiratory specimens tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus decreased from 9.06 per cent in early August to 6.16 per cent in the week ending August 24. The overall SI activity has remained at a low level since the end of influenza season in late July. However, with reference to the previous surveillance data, the CHP expected that activity of COVID-19 and SI may increase at the end of the year and more school outbreaks will be reported.

Seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) can provide protection against influenza infection, and lower the chance of serious complications and death brought about by infection. Parents are advised to arrange for their children to receive SIV for better personal protection by participating in the SIV school outreach activities or visiting their family doctors in the new school year. Research studies have shown that SIV among children may potentially reduce school absenteeism. Parents should note that it takes about two weeks for the body to develop a sufficient level of antibodies to protect against influenza infection after vaccination, so they should receive vaccination early before the winter.

The DH has sent letters to all schools in Hong Kong through the Education Bureau inviting them to participate in the SIV school outreach vaccination programmes. The choice of vaccine options will be more flexible

under the 2024/25 Seasonal Influenza Vaccination School Outreach Programme. Kindergarten and child care centres can choose to provide both injectable inactivated influenza vaccines and live attenuated influenza vaccines (i.e. nasal vaccines) (LAIV) at the same or different outreach vaccination activities. Schools can also invite doctors to arrange outreach service for injectable inactivated influenza vaccines and/or nasal LAIV at their campus under the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme School Outreach. According to local experience, the vaccination rate could prominently increase by more than double if school participated in the outreach programmes, and this will effectively strengthen the immunity barrier of schoolchildren. Schools which have yet to participate should enrol as soon as possible.

#### B. Hand, foot and mouth disease

HFMD is a common disease in children usually caused by enteroviruses such as coxsackie viruses and EV71. In Hong Kong, the peak season for HFMD is usually from May to July and a smaller peak may be observed from October to December. This year, the HFMD activity recorded a slight increase between April and August. As of August 29, the CHP recorded a total of 230 HFMD outbreaks this year, returning to the pre-pandemic level.

HFMD is mainly transmitted by contact with an infected person's nose or throat discharges, saliva, fluid from vesicles or stool, or after touching contaminated objects. As the virus can easily spread through close contacts among students and a smaller peak usually occurs from October to December, the CHP expects that outbreaks of HFMD in schools will continue to occur after the start of the new school year. To prevent the spread of HFMD within school settings, affected children should remain at home and refrain from attending school until they have completely recovered.

#### C. Dengue fever

As of August 29, the CHP has recorded 54 DF cases this year, which marks an increase of over 50 per cent of cases compared with 34 cases recorded during the same period last year. Four of the cases recorded this year are local DF cases and the other are imported cases.

To prevent the recurrence of local transmission of DF, schools should take measures to strengthen work in preventing the accumulation of water and removing potential breeding grounds of mosquitos, such as changing water for plants at least once a week, covering all water containers, and keeping all drains free from blockage etc. The school management is advised to appoint designated staff for mosquito prevention and control in the school premises. Details are available from [the guidelines published by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department](#).

A spokesman for the CHP said, "The CHP has issued letters to primary and secondary schools, kindergartens and childcare centres to remind them to stay alert. If students or staff develop fever, respiratory symptoms, diarrhoea, vomiting or skin rash, schools should strongly advise them not to return to campus and to promptly seek medical advice. Management of schools should

observe precautions on campus, such as maintaining good environmental hygiene and indoor ventilation, to lower the risk of possible transmission of diseases in the school."

Schools are reminded to follow the [Guidelines on Prevention of Communicable Diseases](#) on preventive and control measures as well as management of outbreaks. If an outbreak is suspected, schools should immediately report it to the CHP for prompt follow-up. Schools may also refer to the CHP's pages on [SI](#), [DF](#), [HFMD and EV71 infection](#) for more information. Information on SIV is available on CHP's [Vaccination Schemes page](#).

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## **Clusters of Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales cases in Haven of Hope Hospital**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority.

The spokesperson for Haven of Hope Hospital (HHH) made the following announcement today (August 30):

Seven male patients (aged 74 to 86) in a medicine ward in HHH have been confirmed to be carriers of Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacterales upon testing since August 21. Five patients are being treated in isolation at HHH and are in stable condition. The remaining two patients have been discharged.

The ward concerned has adopted the following enhanced infection control measures:

1. Enhanced patient and environmental screening procedures;
2. Continuing to apply stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene of staff and patients; and
3. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection for the environment and facilities of the ward.

The hospital will continue to closely monitor the situation in the ward concerned. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

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## Update on cluster of Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci cases at Tuen Mun Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE) confirmed cases, the spokesperson for Tuen Mun Hospital made the following update today (August 30):

Following a contact tracing investigation, three more patients, males aged 66 to 80 in the surgical ward, were identified as VRE carriers. Two of them are currently being treated in isolation and are in stable condition, while the remaining patient has been discharged.

The hospital will continue the enhanced infection control measures and closely monitor the situation of the ward concerned. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health for necessary follow-up.

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## Nine landlords of subdivided units under regulated tenancies convicted of contravening relevant statutory requirements

Nine landlords of subdivided units (SDUs), who contravened Part IVA of the Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) Ordinance (Cap. 7), pleaded guilty and were fined a total of \$24,800 today (August 30) at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts. Since the Ordinance came into force, the Rating and Valuation Department (RVD) has successfully prosecuted 368 cases involving a total of 319 SDU landlords, with fines ranging from \$400 to \$34,800, amounting to a total of \$756,410.

The offences of these landlords include (1) failing to submit a Notice of Tenancy (Form AR2) to the Commissioner of Rating and Valuation within 60 days after the term of the regulated tenancy commenced; and (2) failing to produce copies of the bills and provide an account in writing when requiring the tenant to pay for the reimbursement of the apportioned water and/or electricity charges. One of the landlords committed 11 offences under (1) and

was fined \$8,800.

The RVD earlier discovered that the landlords failed to comply with the relevant requirements under the Ordinance. Upon an in-depth investigation and evidence collection, the RVD prosecuted against the landlords.

A spokesman for the RVD reiterated that SDU landlords must comply with the relevant requirements under the Ordinance, and also reminded SDU tenants of their rights under the Ordinance. He also stressed that the RVD will continue to take resolute enforcement action against any contraventions of the Ordinance. Apart from following up on reported cases, the RVD has been adopting a multipronged approach to proactively identify, investigate and follow up on cases concerning landlords who are suspected of contravening the Ordinance. In particular, the RVD has been requiring landlords of regulated tenancies to provide information and reference documents of their tenancies for checking whether the landlords concerned have complied with the requirements of the Ordinance. If a landlord, without reasonable excuse, refuses to provide the relevant information or neglects the RVD's request, the landlord commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine at level 3 (\$10,000) and to imprisonment for three months. Depending on the actual circumstances, and having regard to the information and evidence collected, the RVD will take appropriate actions on individual cases, including instigating prosecution against suspected contraventions of the Ordinance.

To help curb illegal acts as soon as possible, members of the public should report to the RVD promptly any suspected cases of contravening the relevant requirements. Reporting can be made through the telephone hotline (2150 8303), by email ([enquiries@rvd.gov.hk](mailto:enquiries@rvd.gov.hk)), by fax (2116 4920), by post (15/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon), or in person (visiting the Tenancy Services Section office of the RVD at Room 3816-22, 38/F, Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, and please call 2150 8303 to make an appointment). Furthermore, the RVD has provided a form (Form AR4) ([www.rvd.gov.hk/doc/en/forms/ar4.pdf](http://www.rvd.gov.hk/doc/en/forms/ar4.pdf)) on its website to facilitate SDU tenants' reporting to the RVD.

The RVD reminds that pursuant to the Ordinance, a regulated cycle of regulated tenancies is to comprise two consecutive regulated tenancies (i.e. the first-term tenancy and second-term tenancy) for an SDU, and the term of each regulated tenancy is two years. A tenant of a first-term tenancy for an SDU is entitled to be granted a second-term tenancy of the regulated cycle, thus enjoying a total of four years of security of tenure. Since the first batch of regulated tenancies has already approached their second-term tenancies, the RVD has started a new round of publicity and education work in order to assist SDU landlords and tenants to understand the important matters pertaining to the second-term tenancy, and procedures that need to be followed about two months prior to the commencement of the purported second-term tenancy. In addition, the RVD has started issuing letters enclosing relevant information to the concerned landlords and tenants of regulated tenancies in batches, according to the expiry time of their first-term tenancies, to remind them about their respective obligations and rights under the Ordinance. These landlords and tenants may also visit the dedicated page

for the second-term tenancy on the RVD's website ([www.rvd.gov.hk/en/tenancy\\_matters/second\\_term\\_tenancy.html](http://www.rvd.gov.hk/en/tenancy_matters/second_term_tenancy.html)) for the relevant information, including a concise guide, brochures, tutorial videos and frequently asked questions. SDU landlords and tenants are also advised to familiarise themselves with the relevant statutory requirements and maintain close communication regarding the second-term tenancy for handling the matters properly and in a timely manner according to the Ordinance.

For enquiries related to regulated tenancies, please call the telephone hotline (2150 8303) or visit the RVD's webpage ([www.rvd.gov.hk/en/our\\_services/part\\_iva.html](http://www.rvd.gov.hk/en/our_services/part_iva.html)) for the relevant information.