

CHP reviews local HIV/AIDS situation in first quarter of 2023

A total of 96 cases of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection were reported to the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) in the first quarter of 2023, taking the cumulative total of HIV infections reported locally to 11 737 since 1984.

Of the 96 additional cases involving 87 males and nine females, 58 (60.4 per cent) acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact, 19 (19.8 per cent) via heterosexual contact, two (2.1 per cent) via injecting drug use, and one (1 per cent) via blood or blood product transfusion outside Hong Kong. The routes of transmission of the remaining 16 cases have yet to be determined due to incomplete information.

The new cases were mainly reported by three sources: public hospitals, clinics and laboratories (49 cases); private hospitals, clinics and laboratories (14 cases), and the AIDS Unit under the DH (12 cases). Also, 72 newly reported HIV-infected people (75 per cent) have already received HIV specialist services at the DH or the Hospital Authority.

Regarding cases of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), 35 new cases were reported in this quarter, of which 19 cases (54.3 per cent) were attributed to homosexual or bisexual contact, 15 cases (42.9 per cent) were related to heterosexual contact, and one case (2.9 per cent) was associated with injected drug use. In this quarter, the most common AIDS-defining illness remains as Pneumocystis pneumonia. Since 1985, a cumulative total of 2 417 confirmed AIDS cases has been reported in Hong Kong.

Reviewing the latest HIV/AIDS situation in Hong Kong, a spokesman for the CHP said, "Sexual transmission remained the major mode of HIV transmission. Members of the public should use condoms consistently and properly to reduce the risk of acquiring HIV. HIV is the cause of AIDS. Early HIV treatment with antiretroviral drugs effectively prevents progression to AIDS and other complications. Lifelong antiretroviral treatment is indicated for all people with HIV, and the treatment remarkably improves their health and survival. Moreover, infected people who achieve sustained viral suppression to an undetectable level with treatment will not transmit the virus through sex, i.e. Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U).

"Members of the public with a history of unsafe sex should take an HIV antibody test early. Key populations with a higher risk of infection should undergo regular HIV screening, while people who had sex but do not belong to these key populations should consider getting tested at least once. They can visit the AIDS Hotline website or call AIDS Hotline (2780 2211) for a free, anonymous and confidential HIV antibody test. HIV-positive people should seek specialist care and HIV treatment as soon as possible."

The public may visit the following pages for more information on HIV/AIDS: the Virtual AIDS Office (www.aids.gov.hk), the Red Ribbon Centre (www.rrc.gov.hk), the AIDS Hotline website (www.27802211.com) and the Gay Men HIV Information website (www.21171069.gov.hk).

LD to launch exhibition on Employment Ordinance and Minimum Wage Ordinance

Members of the public are invited to visit an exhibition on the Employment Ordinance and the Minimum Wage Ordinance organised by the Labour Department in Sha Tin on June 8 and 9 (Thursday and Friday).

The exhibition will feature the main provisions of the Employment Ordinance and the Minimum Wage Ordinance, good human resource management measures, as well as employment rights and benefits for foreign domestic helpers. Related publications and souvenirs will be distributed, and promotional videos will be shown.

The exhibition will be held at Sales Venue B1, 2/F, Wo Che Plaza, 3 Tak Hau Street, Sha Tin, New Territories, from 11am to 6pm. Admission is free.

Wuhan Han Opera Theatre to debut at Chinese Opera Festival in July to showcase the four-hundred-year glamour of melodious Han style (with photos)

The Wuhan Han Opera Theatre, upon the invitation of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, will make its debut at this year's Chinese Opera Festival (COF) in July. Wang Li, who is a prized mentee of Han opera virtuoso Chen Bohua and a winner of the China Theatre Plum Blossom Award, together with other National Class One performers of the troupe, will visit Hong Kong and stage three performances of iconic plays and excerpts of Han opera at the Theatre of Ko Shan Theatre, offering audiences a taste of the rich legacy of this traditional genre.

First known as "Chuqu" (songs of the south) or "Handiao" (Han tunes), and with a history of nearly four centuries, Han opera is one of the oldest

forms of traditional theatre in China, and was inscribed onto the First National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2006. It has a diverse collection of traditional repertoires, and most of them are based on historical stories and folk legends. Han opera also has an established system for 10 role types. Its prototype voice modes are the vigorous "xipi" and the lingering, delicate "erhuang".

The first performance will begin with a classic martial arts excerpt, "Waylaying the Horse", followed by "The Cosmic Sword", which has been the most popular Han opera play in the last decade. Adapted from a signature repertory of Chen Bohua, the play retains the two best-known excerpts, "Writing the Petition at the Zhao Residence" and "Faking Insanity at the Imperial Court", and features additional scenes including "Zhao-Kuang Alliance" and "Stealing the Sword and Framing Kuang" to enhance the overall coherence of the storyline. The second performance will feature a comedy excerpt, "A Novice Monk and a Young Nun Revoking Their Vows", and "Admonition by Suicide", a play composed of three excerpts. The first is "Crossing Yinping", which demonstrates the superb skill of a "shiza" (painted face) in Han opera. The second excerpt "Jiangyou Pass" features the "sidan" (virtuous female) role that the performer was trained by Hu Heyan, a National Intangible Cultural Bearer. The third excerpt, "Crying in the Ancestral Temple", highlights the arias sung in "fanerhuang" mode that are impassioned and poignant, and is well-known at home and abroad. The final performance of "When the Plum Tree Blooms Again" is a classic play of the Chen Bohua school of Han opera. Both the scenes "Praying to Plum Blossoms" and "Chastising the Minister" highlight the elegant demeanour and dignified disposition of the "qingyi" (virtuous female) role in Han opera, while the "Congtai" scene showcases the subdued and melodious "erhuang" tone of the Chen school.

Details of the three performances are as follows:

Date and time: July 7 (Friday), 7.30pm

Excerpt "Waylaying the Horse"

Main cast: Wen Junhua, Hu Ziyu

Synopsis: While going on an expedition with the Yang army, Jiao Guangpu is stranded in hostile territory. He operates an inn at the Boundary Stake Pass, and always longs to return home but in vain. Twenty years later, Dowager She sends the eighth daughter of the Yang family, Yang Bajie, to sneak into the Liao kingdom to spy on the enemy's military activities. Disguised as a man, Bajie arrives at Guangpu's inn. Guangpu plans to steal the security pass she carries on her waist. The two end up fighting. On learning the truth, they ruefully acknowledge each other.

"The Cosmic Sword"

Main cast: Wang Li, Zhu Yong, Wang Jing, Xiong Guoqiang, Zeng Chun, Fan Qiong, Shan Qing

Synopsis: In the Qin Dynasty, Zhao Gao is the imperial tutor who harbours an ambition to usurp absolute political power. His treachery is opposed by Prime Minister Kuang Hong. Kuang possesses a "cosmic sword" bestowed by the late emperor that accords him the authority to execute wrongdoers without prior

imperial permission. Zhao schemes to form an alliance with Kuang by marrying his daughter Zhao Yanrong into the Kuang family. Yet Kuang still refuses to collaborate with him. Zhao steals the "cosmic sword" and frames the Kuang family for a crime they did not commit, thus landing them in jail. Zhao then plans to offer his daughter to the younger Emperor Qin, hoping the emperor will in return bestow the "cosmic sword" on him. On realising her father's devious plot, Yanrong resolutely resists him and the emperor, embarking on the journey to find her husband.

Date and time: July 8 (Saturday), 7.30pm

Excerpt "A Novice Monk and a Young Nun Revoking Their Vows"

Main cast: Sun Wei, Wang Xiaolu

Synopsis: Having grown up in the Xiantao Nunnery as a novice, a young girl from the Zhao family is unwilling to bear the harsh and lonely life of the order. Yearning for the secular world, she absconds. Meanwhile, the young monk Mengwu flees from the monastery in the mountain as he likewise cannot bear the austere life and loneliness there. When the two runaways meet along the way, they get on extremely well and share their thoughts. They make a pact to revoke their respective vows in order to be married.

"Admonition by Suicide"

Main cast: Wang Li, Xiong Guoqiang, Zhu Yong, Zeng Chun, Shan Qing, Mao Wei, Yi Chao, Yan Changlin

Synopsis: During the Three Kingdoms period, the Wei general Deng Ai is sent on a military expedition to Sichuan to overrun the State of Shu. Deng secretly leads his troops through the Yinping Trail to ambush the enemy garrison at Jiangyou Pass. Upon learning that Deng's vanguard is at their doorstep, the Shu General Ma Miao plans to surrender, a move his wife Madam Li vehemently opposes to no avail. Ma capitulates without resistance by handing over the city seal. Madam Li kills herself as the ultimate sacrifice for her state. The Shu emperor Liu Shan is terrified by the turn of events. His son Liu Chen, Prince of Beidi, attempts to convince his father to fight, but his pleas fall on deaf ears. Furious, Liu Chen returns to his palace and kills his wife and son. Then he goes to the Imperial Ancestral Temple to tearfully beg for forgiveness from his illustrious ancestors before committing suicide.

Date and time: July 9 (Sunday), 2.30pm

"When the Plum Tree Blooms Again"

Main cast: Li Qing, Zhang Zhiwen, Wu Zhengguang, He Yu, Zhu Yong, Mao Wei, Shan Qing, Xiong Guoqiang

Synopsis: During the Tang dynasty, treacherous Prime Minister Lu Qi brings false charges against Mei Bogao to destroy him and his family. Bogao's son Mei Liangyu manages to escape by travelling incognito. He finds refuge as a servant at the home of Chen Risheng, a close friend of Bogao. One day, a strong wind blows, causing the plum flowers in full bloom to shed and scatter, reminding Risheng of the tragic fate of the Mei family. He is so disheartened that he wants to take a vow to become a Taoist monk. His anguish moves the gods, and the plum blossoms bloom once more. Risheng's daughter

Chen Xingyuan happens to meet Liangyu. After questioning, she realises Liangyu is the scion of the Mei family. Risheng is overjoyed and betroths Xingyuan to Liangyu. At the malicious behest of Lu Qi, Xingyuan is decreed to be sent to the frontier to marry a barbarian as a peace offering. On her way to the border, Xingyuan meets with Liangyu at Congtai, where they get engaged and swear eternal love for one another, before finally committing suicide by leaping off a cliff.

Wuhan Han Opera Theatre was formerly the Wuhan Han Opera Troupe, first founded in 1962. Led by Chen Bohua, a leading virtuoso of the art form, the group has built a strong cast with the 10 main role types complete. Over the years, the group has contributed tremendously to the research, archive compilation and innovation of the traditional art form of Han opera. It was listed in 2013 as a major performing company for regional theatre at the national level. Many of its productions have won awards in national competitions, and some of them have been made into art films for Chinese traditional theatre and television series.

Three performances will be held at the Theatre of Ko Shan Theatre. Each performance will run for about two hours and 30 minutes, including an intermission of 15 minutes. Lyrics and dialogue are with Chinese and English surtitles. Tickets priced at \$160, \$220, \$280 and \$360 are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone bookings, please call 3166 1288. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7325 or visit www.cof.gov.hk/2023/en/han.html.

A Meet-the-Artists session entitled "The Regional Characteristics and Theatrical Features of Han Opera" (in Putonghua) will be held at 7.30pm on July 6 (Thursday) at AC2, 4/F, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre. The speakers include Executive Producer of Wuhan Han Opera Theatre, Yan Xiaoyi, Wang Li and other cast members of the troupe, while Chinese opera researcher Chan Chun-miu and Director of the troupe Huang Lang will be the moderators. Admission is free with limited seats available on a first-come, first-served basis. Details can be found on the above-mentioned website.

Since its inception in 2010, the COF has curated quality operatic programmes with the aim of promoting the artistry and culture of Chinese traditional opera. COF 2023 will once again bring together an excellent line-up of Chinese opera troupes to stage nine quality operatic programmes covering a variety of theatrical genres, including Peking opera, Qu opera, Sichuan opera, Han opera, Cantonese opera, Wu opera, Kunqu opera and Yue opera, from June to October, showcasing the splendour of Chinese operatic art in all its glory. For more details, please visit www.cof.gov.hk.



Public urged to report flooding

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

Members of the public are advised to report any street flooding that comes to their notice to the Drainage Services Department by calling the 24-hour drainage hotline on 2300 1110.

Employers, contractors and employees should be aware of electrical safety at work during rainstorm

As the rainstorm warning has been issued by the Hong Kong Observatory, the Labour Department (LD) reminds employers and contractors that they should

adopt necessary work arrangements and take suitable safety measures to protect the safety of their employees when they are carrying out electrical work or handling electrical plant.

A spokesman for the LD said today (June 6) that employers and contractors should avoid assigning employees to carry out electrical work (like electric arc welding work) or handle electrical plant at places affected by rainstorms, and should refer to the "Code of Practice in times of Typhoons and Rainstorms" and the "Guide on Safety at Work in times of Inclement Weather" issued by the LD.

Even if electrical work is carried out or electrical plant is handled at places not affected by the rainstorm, suitable safety measures must still be adopted to prevent electric shock as the air would be more humid. Such measures include:

- (i) Ensure that all live parts of an electrical installation are isolated from the power supply source and rendered dead, and the isolation from the power supply source must be maintained as long as electrical work is being carried out;
- (ii) Before carrying out any electrical work or handling any electrical plant, cut off and lock out the power supply source, then test the circuit concerned to confirm it is dead and display suitable warning notices, and issue a work permit thereafter;
- (iii) Ensure that protective devices (such as suitable and adequate fuses and circuit breakers) for the electrical installations or electrical plant have been installed and maintained in good working order, and portable electric tools must be double-insulated or properly earthed;
- (iv) Provide suitable personal protective equipment such as insulating gloves and insulating mats for employees; and
- (v) If live electrical work is unavoidable, a comprehensive risk assessment should be conducted by a competent person and the appropriate safety precautions should be taken to remove or properly control the electrical hazards involved before such work can proceed.

In addition, employees should co-operate with the employer or contractor to follow the safety instructions and use the safety equipment provided.

The LD has published guidebooks and leaflets on electrical work safety. These safety publications are available free from divisional offices of the department or can be downloaded from its website (www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/content2_8.htm).

Should there be any questions about occupational safety and health matters, please contact the Occupational Safety Officer of the LD at 2559 2297.