

Speech by DCS at opening ceremony of VTC Future Skills Community Event (English only) (with photo)

Following is the speech by the Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Cheuk Wing-hing, at the opening ceremony of VTC Future Skills Community Event 2022 today (December 9):

Chairman Tai (Chairman of the Vocational Training Council (VTC), Mr Tony Tai), members of the VTC Council, industry partners, teachers, students, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. I am delighted to join you for the opening ceremony of the Future Skills Community Event, hosted by the Vocational Training Council with support from the Education Bureau.

Running right through the weekend, this inspiring event embraces so much of what makes us proud to be part of the Hong Kong community.

It is a formal event celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Hong Kong SAR's establishment. It is also a thematic activity for the Education Week and, no less important, it is a signature event marking the Vocational Training Council's 40th anniversary.

Congratulations, VTC, on your 40th birthday – it is a remarkable four decades of educating Hong Kong youth and, in doing so, providing a key competitive edge for our industry and the businesses that drive it.

This three-day gathering celebrating the theme of Future Skills for Community showcases the new knowledge and skills that will equip young people for navigating through today and tomorrow's workplace and economy. Just to name a few of these – cybersecurity, cloud computing, the metaverse, VR (virtual reality) and AR (augmented reality) technologies. All are future skills that will be in great demand.

The activities on offer through the event are multifarious, ranging from seminars and talks by industry experts to skill demonstrations, try-a-skill activities, exhibition booths, fashion shows and so on, all seeking to bring about well-rounded training and education.

Hong Kong is blessed with long-term, wide-ranging opportunities, thanks to key national strategies such as the National 14th Five-Year Plan. The Plan supports Hong Kong's leadership role, regionally and internationally, in eight high-profile sectors and industries that include the fast-emerging industries of innovation and technology and arts and culture.

Alongside the opportunities come the challenges. The most pressing of

which perhaps is ensuring that we have the talent we need to power those industries, to take full advantage of our nation's support.

The Chief Executive focused on this need in his October Policy Address. In it, he outlined a menu of actions and initiatives to compete for the innovative companies and smart young talent that can boost Hong Kong's competitiveness.

The initiatives include a Top Talent Pass Scheme to entice talented individuals to pursue their careers in Hong Kong.

A Talents Service Unit, led by the Chief Secretary for Administration, will devise strategies to recruit Mainland and international talent. The Unit will streamline and fast-track applications received under our various talent admission schemes. Support services will be provided in areas such as education arrangements for the talents' children.

In short, we want to make it as easy as possible for international and Mainland companies, and talented professionals from around the world, to look our way for their future.

No less important is our home-grown talent. We need to expand our pool of local talent and the skills they can bring to industry, to our economy and our community. To make that happen, we will emphasise industry-institution collaboration and diversified development, promoting VPET (vocational and professional education and training) as a pathway parallel to conventional academic education. In this regard, VPET providers, including the VTC, have a crucial role to play.

Through the VTC, young people come away with flexible skills, the latest technologies and an infusion of essential knowledge. With stakeholder support, they will make a decided difference, today and tomorrow, in our industries and workplaces.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, will go a long way towards ensuring the flourishing and sustainable development of Hong Kong.

I know you will enjoy the Vocational Training Council's Future Skills Community Event and I wish the VTC and students all the best in the coming year.

Thank you.



Government gazettes compulsory testing notice

The Government exercises the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and publishes in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, which requires any person who had been present at 42 specified places during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

In view of a number of cases testing positive, 37 specified places are included in the compulsory testing notice. Furthermore, since some sewage samples collected in Tai Wai, Sha Tin and Kwai Chung have tested positive, five specified places are included in the compulsory testing notice. The Government strongly reminds members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo testing on time as required. Community testing centres (CTCs)/community testing stations (CTSs)/ad-hoc mobile specimen collection stations have been set up by the Government in different districts to facilitate testing to be conducted in compliance with the compulsory testing notice. The above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well.

Persons who have tested positive in the past three months (including positive cases tested either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests (RATs) that have been self-declared to the DH) do not need to undergo compulsory testing. For those who need to undergo compulsory testing, they must undergo nucleic acid tests in accordance with relevant compulsory testing notices and cannot use RATs to fulfil the requirement of such notices. In other words, a negative RAT result cannot be deemed as fulfilling the compulsory testing requirement. Furthermore, unless a person subject to compulsory testing has obtained a medical certificate proving that he or she is unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through a "throat swab" because of health reasons, the person

cannot provide a deep throat saliva sample to fulfil the compulsory testing requirement.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are available on the Centre for Health Protection (CHP)'s website via the following link: www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/ctn_20221209.pdf.

If any persons test positive under compulsory testing, such positive cases will be handled in the same manner as in those identified through other nucleic acid tests or self-declared through RATs. Their isolation arrangements (as well as the quarantine arrangements of their household members) are no different from other positive cases.

Persons subject to compulsory testing in accordance with a compulsory testing notice must undergo professional swab sampling at any of the ad-hoc mobile specimen collection stations, CTCs/CTSs or recognised local medical testing institutions in order to fulfil the requirements for compulsory testing. Young children may continue to undergo the test using a stool specimen. For details on obtaining stool specimen bottles, please refer to the COVID-19 thematic website: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/Stool_bottle_collection_points.pdf.

If the Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or above, the Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or the post-super typhoon "extreme conditions" announcement by the Government is in force at any time during the period for undergoing the compulsory testing, the period for undergoing the compulsory testing will be extended for one day.

Vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from COVID-19. They can provide protection to those vaccinated to prevent serious complications and even death after infection. The Government appeals to persons who are not yet vaccinated to get vaccinated without delay. In view of the arrival of the Comirnaty Original/Omicron BA.4-5 bivalent vaccine in Hong Kong, members of the public may choose to receive the BioNTech bivalent vaccine when they make appointments through the online booking system to receive the third or fourth dose (or the second or third dose for recovered persons) from now on, while the Sinovac or the BioNTech ancestral strain vaccines can still be used. Eligible persons aged 60 or above with same-day tickets may choose the type of vaccine to be administered on site.

[CTCs/CTSs across the city](#) provide free nucleic acid testing services for the public, including eligible persons of targeted groups, visitors to public hospitals and residential care homes and all elderly people aged 60 or above. Relevant persons who wish to undergo a free test just need to make an online booking or use the Testing Registration QR code in the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application for registration.â€€

Booking services are available for all 86 CTC/CTSs. Members of the public can make bookings through the online booking system (booking.communitytest.gov.hk/form/index.jsp). Members of the public can also fill in their personal information in advance to obtain the Testing Registration Code QR code through the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile application.

They can present that QR code for scanning before testing at a service point thereafter, thus saving their time spent on registration and queueing.

The Government has set up a new regular CTS at the basketball court next to Wang Lai House of Wang Tau Hom Estate in Lok Fu (near Lung Cheung Road and Tin Ma Court) for convenient testing by members of the public of Lok Fu and Kowloon Tong area. The Government will reopen the ad-hoc mobile specimen collection station at Lido Garden in Sham Tseng tomorrow (December 10), and the service period of the ad-hoc mobile specimen collection station at On Yam Estate in Kwai Chung will be extended to December 11 (Sunday). The opening dates and service hours of the ad-hoc mobile specimen collection stations are stated in the Annex.

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

(a) For tests which require using a sample taken through "combined nasal and throat swabs" or "throat swab"

1. To visit any of the ad-hoc mobile specimen collection stations (see the list and target groups (if applicable)

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) for testing;

2. To attend any of the CTCs/CTSs (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en);

3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results (see the list

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf), and the relevant sample must be taken through "combined nasal and throat swabs" or "throat swab"; or

4. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the stool sample collected per relevant guidelines.

(b) For persons holding a medical certificate issued by a registered medical practitioner proving that they are unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through a "throat swab" because of health reasons

1. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from post offices, vending machines set up at MTR stations or designated general out-patient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to one of the designated specimen collection points (see the distribution points and times, and the specimen collection points and times,

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);

2. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or

3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results.

A Government spokesman cautioned that testing received at the Accident and Emergency Departments of the Hospital Authority, or testing provided by private laboratories which cannot issue SMS notifications in respect of test results, does not comply with the requirements of the aforementioned

compulsory testing notice.

"If persons subject to compulsory testing have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo testing as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the ad-hoc mobile specimen collection stations or the CTCs/CTSs."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notifications containing the result of the test and the relevant medical certificate (if applicable) for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to relevant premises, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the compulsory testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and the maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months. The fixed penalty for discharging the liability is \$10,000. The person may also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Any person in breach of the compulsory testing order would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

The spokesman said, "The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health conditions, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."

Immigration Department extends facilitation measure to accept applications for extension of stay from Hong Kong non-permanent residents outside Hong Kong under pandemic

The Immigration Department (ImmD) today (December 9) announced that the facilitation measure to accept applications for extension of stay from Hong Kong non-permanent residents outside Hong Kong is extended to June 30, 2023, in view of the circumstances under the COVID-19 pandemic.

Implemented on April 8, the said facilitation measure had been set to expire on December 31, 2022. Eligible non-permanent residents who are admitted into Hong Kong under the following immigration policies/schemes and whose limit of stay is about to expire (generally within four weeks) but are presently outside Hong Kong may now apply for an extension of stay before June 30, 2023, under the said facilitation measure:

1. General Employment Policy (including both employment and investment as entrepreneurs);
2. Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals;
3. Quality Migrant Admission Scheme;
4. Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates;
5. Admission Scheme for the Second Generation of Chinese Hong Kong Permanent Residents;
6. Technology Talent Admission Scheme;
7. Capital Investment Entrant Scheme;
8. residence as dependants; and
9. students enrolled in full-time study programmes.

Non-permanent residents are reminded that the approval of an extension of stay does not constitute any implication or acknowledgement from the ImmD that they can fulfil the ordinary residence requirement under the relevant provisions of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap. 115) for acquiring the right of abode. Even if their applications for an extension of stay are approved, whether they can fulfil the seven-year continuous ordinary residence requirement for acquiring the right of abode in Hong Kong will have to be assessed by the ImmD at the time when they apply for verification of eligibility for a permanent identity card.

The arrangements of the facilitation measure are set out on www.immd.gov.hk/eng/ext/npr.html. Depending on the development of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ImmD will review whether to further extend the measure in due course. For enquiries, please call 2824 6111, or send enquiries to the ImmD by fax at 2877 7711 or by email at enquiry@immd.gov.hk.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at yesterday (December 8), a total of 3 404 patients who tested positive for COVID-19 are hospitalised for treatment. Among the hospitalised confirmed patients, 555 were new patients, 2 300 required isolation, 363 required oxygen therapy and 29 required ventilator support. There were nine

newly reported critical patients and 17 newly reported serious patients. There were a total of 69 patients in critical condition and 96 in serious condition, of which 21 critical patients are receiving intensive care. Moreover, there were 382 patients who have recovered, including 326 patients who have been discharged. In addition, 23 patients who passed away in public hospitals were reported.

The overall occupancy of medical beds in acute hospitals is around 104 per cent.

In addition, nine patients in a male ward for severe intellectual disability of Siu Lam Hospital tested positive for COVID-19 since December 6, six of whom had symptoms. All infected patients are being treated in isolation and are in stable condition. Admission and visiting arrangements for the ward concerned have been suspended. Thorough cleaning and disinfection have been conducted in the areas concerned, while infection control measures have been enhanced.

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.

[Secretary for Education undergoing home quarantine](#)

A spokesman for the Education Bureau said today (December 9) that the Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin, is undergoing home quarantine in accordance with the guidelines of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, as a family member in her household has tested positive for COVID-19. Dr Choi will work from home during the quarantine period.

Dr Choi has been taking COVID-19 nucleic acid tests regularly. She obtained negative results after conducting a nucleic acid test yesterday (December 8) and a rapid antigen test today.