

Update on monitoring COVID-19 vaccination

In the preceding week till 11.59pm on May 22, the Department of Health (DH) received 28 reports (Note 1) of adverse events following COVID-19 immunisation. No death case was reported by the Hospital Authority (HA) involving individuals who had received vaccines within 14 days before they passed away and had potential association with vaccination.

As at 8pm on May 22, around 16.68 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been administered for members of the public. Around 6.69 million people had received at least one dose of vaccine, including 93.2 per cent of the population aged 12 or above. The DH received 7 511 reports of adverse events (0.05 per cent of the total vaccine doses administered). Among the death cases concerning persons who had been vaccinated, including 104 cases (Note 2) with vaccination within 14 days before they passed away (0.0006 per cent of the total vaccine doses administered), none of the death cases was associated with vaccination.

As at May 22, the Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation had concluded that 61 death cases had no causal relationship with vaccination, and preliminarily considered that 11 cases were not associated with vaccination. Thirty-two cases are still pending further information for assessment. The Expert Committee considered that there is no unusual pattern identified so far, and will continue to closely monitor the relevant situation and collect data for assessment.

According to information from the HA, during the period from April 25 to May 22, the ratio of death cases out of those without a vaccination record was 242.4 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of death cases for those with a vaccination record was 29.1 cases for every 100 000 people. Out of those without a vaccination record, the ratio of death cases with acute stroke or acute myocardial infarction was 7.6 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of death cases under the same category for those with a vaccination record was 1.7 cases for every 100 000 people. Furthermore, the ratio of miscarriage cases out of those without a vaccination record was 127.0 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of miscarriage cases for those who had a vaccination record was 10.2 cases for every 100 000 people. Based on the statistical analysis of the above figures, there is no evidence that vaccination increases the risk of death or miscarriage for recipients. The relevant reference statistics will be uploaded to the thematic website for the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.

The majority of non-death cases of adverse events received so far are relatively minor cases. The relevant details can be found in the "Report on the Safety Monitoring of COVID-19 Vaccines in Hong Kong" (www.drugoffice.gov.hk/eps/do/en/doc/Safety_Monitoring_of_COVID-19_Vaccines_in_Hong_Kong.pdf).

A Government spokesman said, "Given the high transmissibility of the Omicron mutant strain, members of the public must still stay vigilant even if the epidemic situation has subsided a little recently. Deaths and severe cases involving children and elderly persons, who are our focus of protection in vaccination, have been recorded in the fifth wave of the epidemic. For elderly persons, the COVID-19 vaccination rate for the elderly aged 80 or above in Hong Kong is only around 67 per cent at present, meaning that around 33 per cent of the elderly in that age group are in a dangerous situation, which is alarming.

"According to preliminary data analysis, out of the cases reported in the fifth wave, over 95 per cent of the fatal cases are elderly people aged 60 or above, with the proportion of death and hospitalised cases being the highest in those aged 80 or above. Most of the deceased cases are unvaccinated persons. As compared to the Hong Kong overall population, those who have received three doses of vaccine account for a much lower proportion among reported cases, and an extremely low proportion among the hospitalised critical/serious and deceased cases. This demonstrates the effectiveness of three doses of vaccine in preventing infection, serious illness and fatality from COVID-19. Even with just the first dose of vaccine, the risk of death can be significantly reduced. The latest research data from the University of Hong Kong also shows that receiving three doses of either the Comirnaty or CoronaVac vaccine is highly effective for preventing severe cases and deaths with over 90 per cent effectiveness. Members of the public who are currently eligible for a third dose should get the third dose as soon as possible.

"Furthermore, in response to the latest advice from experts, we have started the administration of the fourth vaccine dose for persons aged 60 or above who have received three doses of the Comirnaty or CoronaVac vaccine. They may receive the fourth dose no less than three months after their last dose. For persons aged 18 to 59 with a higher risk of COVID-19 exposure, or a greater risk of COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of their occupational setting, they may choose to receive a fourth dose no less than six months from their third dose. Members of the public may also receive a fourth dose due to personal needs (such as studying abroad or travelling). On the other hand, the minimum age for receiving the CoronaVac vaccine has been lowered to 3 years old, while the minimum age for receiving the Comirnaty vaccine is 5 years old. We call on parents to arrange vaccination for their children as early as possible for better protection."

Note 1: Provisional figures. In the preceding week till 11.59pm on May 22, the DH did not receive any reports of suspected myocarditis or pericarditis involving adolescents in the age group of 3 to 15.

Note 2: In the preceding week till 11.59pm on May 22, the DH received one death report involving an individual who had received COVID-19 vaccination within 14 days before passing away. The case involved a male aged 93. There is no clinical evidence that the incident arose from vaccination.

Update on supplies from Mainland

The Task Force of Supplies from the Mainland led by the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) has been working closely with the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government to explore various means to stabilise the supply of goods from the Mainland to Hong Kong. In addition to road transport arrangements, transportation of goods by water and railway is already in service.

A spokesperson for the THB said that the "Sea Express" water transportation service from the Mainland to Hong Kong has been fully launched and its capacity is rising to increase the supplies of fresh food, other daily necessities and manufacturing materials. The current supply of fresh food from the Mainland is stable.

Currently, there are three water transportation routes between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, namely (1) from Shenzhen Yantian International Container Terminals to Hong Kong Kwai Tsing Container Terminals (KTCT); (2) from Shenzhen DaChan Bay Terminals to KTCT; and (3) from China Merchants Port (South China) Management Center (Shenzhen Mawan, Shekou and Chiwan Container Terminals) to Hong Kong River Trade Terminal and elsewhere. Together with the water transportation routes from other cities in Guangdong Province, including the routes from Guangzhou Lianhuashan Port, Nansha Port, Huadu Port, Zhongshan Huangpu Port and Zhuhai Doumen Port to different terminals in Hong Kong, the water transport capacity amounts to tens of thousands of tonnes daily.

The spokesperson said today (May 25) that Shenzhen operated 62 cargo vessel trips and transported around 5 300 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of cross-boundary supplies by water yesterday (May 24), equivalent to about 29 000 tonnes of goods, of which around 10 TEUs (about 20 tonnes) were fresh food and around 5 290 TEUs (about 28 980 tonnes) were non-fresh food, according to information from the Mainland authorities.

Since the launch of services from the three ports in Shenzhen since February 18 to yesterday, a total of around 417 580 TEUs of cross-boundary supplies have been transported, equivalent to about 2 108 010 tonnes of goods, of which around 1 760 TEUs (about 15 040 tonnes) were fresh food and around 415 820 TEUs (about 2 092 970 tonnes) were non-fresh food.

To further ensure a stable goods supply to Hong Kong through land transport, a trial run of cargo transfer was conducted by the THB at a yard situated on Kam Pok Road, San Tin, Yuen Long, and it was completed smoothly. The THB will continue to work with the Mainland authorities to fully take forward cargo transfer arrangements on the Hong Kong side. It is a contingency measure in response to the latest epidemic situation in the city so as to reduce the risk of epidemic transmission in both the Mainland and

Hong Kong, ensuring both smooth cross-boundary land transport and a stable goods supply to Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, to avoid a spillover of the epidemic, the Transport Department (TD) has arranged for dedicated staff to conduct rapid antigen tests for cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers at various land boundary control points (BCPs) from February 28 onwards. Only drivers with a negative result are allowed to enter the Mainland. In order to further improve the accuracy of the tests, the TD has already switched to use rapid nucleic acid tests at the BCPs. Starting from April 21, the sampling method for rapid nucleic acid tests has been further changed to nasopharyngeal swabs. A total of 3 192 rapid nucleic acid tests were conducted yesterday in which 26 drivers preliminarily tested positive. The TD has passed the cases to the Department of Health for follow-up.

The THB will closely monitor the situation and co-operate with the Mainland authorities to facilitate and implement various measures to ensure a stable goods supply to Hong Kong, with a view to complementing the supply through road, water and railway transport, enhancing capacity and efficiency as well as optimising the flow of cross-boundary supplies.

[Money changer and its director as well as one man and two women convicted of operating money service without licence](#)

Hong Kong Customs earlier detected two cases of unlicensed money service operation. A money changer and its director were fined \$10,000 and \$12,000 respectively at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts while on the other hand a man and two women were sentenced to community service of 80 to 160 hours at Fanling Magistrates' Courts.

In the first case, Customs officers in December 2020 conducted an investigation and found that a male director had been operating remittance business at a money changer in Hung Hom after expiry of the money service operator licence. The director and the money changer were suspected of operating a money service without a licence. The male director was fined \$10,000 in January this year while the money changer was fined \$12,000 today (May 25) after they were convicted at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts.

In the second case, Customs officers in May last year initiated an investigation against a man and his wife who were suspected of operating remittance business without a licence via a social media platform page. After

in-depth investigation, Customs officers discovered that the remittance business was operated by using the bank account of the man's mother-in-law. The three persons were sentenced to community service of 80 to 160 hours at Fanling Magistrates' Courts today.

Under the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance, a person who operates a remittance and/or money changing service needs to first obtain a licence from the Customs and Excise Department. The maximum penalty for such operators without a valid licence upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for six months.

Customs reminds consumers to procure services from licensed money service operators. A register of licensees is accessible from the website of Customs' Money Service Operators Licensing System at eservices.customs.gov.hk/MSOS/wsrh/001s1?request_locale=en.

Members of the public may report any suspected unlicensed money service operation to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

Hospital Authority announces positive patient cases detected via admission screening or testing and clusters of nosocomial COVID-19 infections

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority today (May 25) announced information regarding patients who tested positive via admission screening or testing with patients or staff members identified as close contacts and nosocomial COVID-19 infection cases.

The following are the statistics of patients who tested positive via admission screening or by testing in public hospitals with patients or staff members identified as close contacts:

Hospital/clinic	Number of patients who tested positive	Number of patients identified as close contacts	Number of staff members without appropriate personal protective equipment identified as close contacts
Kowloon Hospital	1	2	–
Prince of Wales Hospital	1	1	–
Tuen Mun Hospital	1	2	–

Thorough cleaning and disinfection operations have been performed in the affected areas by the hospitals. The hospitals will continue to closely monitor the health conditions of patients and staff members, and communicate with the Centre for Health Protection on the latest situation.

There have been no clusters of nosocomial infection cases reported in public hospitals today.

[LCQ8: Supply of sports venues](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Ngan Man-yu and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 25):

Question:

It has been reported that as the supply of sports venues under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) falls short of demand and such venues are often fully booked, some hirers tout their booked sessions for using the LCSD's sports venues for profit (touting activities). In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) in respect of the LCSD's prevailing measures for combating touting activities, of the following information in each of the past three years:

(i) the number of cases in which the LCSD refused the use of the facility by a hirer because the information on the identity document produced by the hirer upon check-in was inconsistent with the booking record or irregularities were identified, as well as the number of complaints received as a result;

(ii) the number of cases in which the LCSD suspended a hirer's eligibility to book its facilities for 180 days because the hirer had been found to have

engaged in unauthorised transfer of the user permit, as well as the number of complaints received as a result; and

(iii) the number of complaints about touting activities received by the LCSD, and the number of such complaints it investigated and followed up;

(2) given that the LCSD has, since the 1st of this month, implemented a new measure to combat touting activities (i.e. arranging for random inspections by its staff during the booked sessions to see if the hirer is present to use the facility), (i) whether there are on-site staff on duty at all the sports venues under the LCSD at present, and (ii) whether the LCSD has sufficient staff on site to conduct random inspections; if so, of the details of the manpower arrangements; if not, whether LCSD will increase its manpower;

(3) whether the LCSD has studied the reasons why its sports venues are often fully booked, and of the solutions for that; and

(4) whether it will take the following measures to alleviate the situation of the supply of sports venues falling short of demand:

(i) review the standards for the provision of sports facilities in the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines, as well as increase the ratio of sports facilities to population;

(ii) introduce "recreation and sports vouchers" to subsidise members of the public to hire sports venues run by the private sector;

(iii) use some community halls' facilities as temporary sports venues; and

(iv) arrange for schools to open their ball courts for hire by members of the public during non-school hours; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

My reply to the question raised by the Hon Ngan Man-yu is as follows:

(1) In recent years, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has adopted a multi-pronged approach comprising an improved booking system, a penalty mechanism and stepped-up inspection to combat touting activities. The department imposes penalties on individuals who fail to show up or breach the regulations. Two no-show records within 30 days will incur suspension of a person's rights to book the sports facilities for 90 days. If a hirer is found to have engaged in unauthorised transfer of user permit, his/her booking right for sports facilities will be suspended for 180 days.

As required under the Conditions of Use of LCSD Recreation and Sports Facilities (Conditions of Use), hirers must produce valid user permits with their identity documents for verification by on-site staff before using the

facilities. If the identity document provided by the hirer is inconsistent with the department's booking record, his/her right to use the facility will be rejected by the LCSD immediately. Failure of a hirer to take up the booked session according to the relevant requirements and the aforesaid procedures will be counted as one no-show record. Two no-show records within 30 consecutive days will incur suspension of a person's rights to book the LCSD's fee-charging recreation and sports facilities for 90 days. In the past three years, there were more than 137 000 cases involving refused use of the relevant facilities due to the hirer's failure to take up the booked sessions in person or discrepancy between the identity document provided by user and that on the booking record. Among them, more than 8 000 members of the public with two no-show records had their booking rights for the LCSD's fee-charging recreation and sports facilities suspended for 90 days. Moreover, two hirers had their booking rights for sports facilities suspended for 180 days due to their engagement in unauthorised transfer of user permit. The number of relevant cases is at Annex I.

To take appropriate follow-up actions against touting activities, the LCSD will, upon receipt of complaints, conduct investigation and take follow-up actions as appropriate, including conducting surprise inspections during the booked sessions, requiring the hirer to provide his/her identity document for checking again, etc. If any irregularities are identified, offenders will be penalised in accordance with the related penalties. In the past three years, the LCSD received 900 complaints about touting activities and conducted investigation and follow-up actions accordingly under the aforesaid mechanism. The number of relevant complaints is at Annex II.

(2) To further combat touting activities, the LCSD has implemented a new measure starting from May 1, 2022. In accordance with the provisions of the Conditions of Use, the hirer must be present during the use of the booked sessions. Random inspections will be conducted by venue staff during the booked sessions. If the hirer is not present during the use of the facilities, it will result in one count of breach of Conditions of Use by the hirer. Any two counts of breach within 30 consecutive days will result in suspension of the relevant person's rights to book the fee-charging recreation and sports facilities of the LCSD for 90 days. As at May 20, 2022, there were more than 200 occasions where hirers were found not present at the venues and 10 of them with two no-show records had their booking rights for venues suspended for 90 days. The new measure is currently enforced by more than 350 on-site staff at the relevant LCSD venues. There is no need to deploy additional manpower at this stage.

(3) In view of the first phase of the relaxation of social distancing measures, the LCSD reopened 61 out of a total of 103 sports centres (i.e. about 60 per cent) under its management on April 21, 2022. As some of the sports centres were still being used for anti-epidemic purposes at that time, there were fewer venues available for public use, leading to a tight supply of facilities. With the easing of the epidemic situation, relevant bureaux and departments have returned some of the sports centres to the LCSD. It is expected that by mid-June, about 20 sports centres will be reopened and about 80 per cent of the sports centres will be available for public use. This will

help alleviate the prevailing tight supply situation.

Besides, following the population growth and the increasing number of people participating in sports activities, the Government announced in the Policy Address in January 2017 the Five-year Plan for Sports and Recreational Facilities (the Five-year Plan) to develop new or improve existing sports and recreation facilities. Through implementing the Five-year Plan, we have made continuous efforts to increase and improve sports facilities and open spaces, with a view to encouraging members of the public to exercise regularly and improving the quality of living, providing additional venues for training by national sports associations (NSAs) and athletes, and facilitating the diversification of sports development. Four sports centres, namely Tsuen Wan Sports Centre, Siu Lun Sports Centre, Che Kung Temple Sports Centre and Choi Wing Road Sports Centre, have been completed and commissioned since 2018. Furthermore, Sham Shui Po Sports Centre is expected to be commissioned in the third quarter of 2022. The LCSD will provide more sports facilities for public use in future.

(4) (i) The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) reported to the Panel on Home Affairs of the Legislative Council on September 27, 2021 on the Consultancy Study on Provision of Sports Facilities in Hong Kong conducted by the consultants. The consultants conducted a telephone survey to collect the latest preferences of the general public on sports activities and provided recommendations on the planning of community sports facilities for them. Besides, the consultants surveyed the need of various stakeholders such as the NSAs on their demand and usage of the current sports facilities, thereby worked out the number of additional territorial and regional sports facilities required in five and 10 years' time to cater for athletes' training and competition needs so identified. The consultants recommended formulating a facility hierarchy, devising new population-based provision standards for core sports facilities for community usage as well as introducing a new methodology to assess provision levels for sports facilities, etc. Taking into account of the consultants' overall recommendation, revision to the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines will be prepared as necessary.

(ii) Heavily subsidised by the Government, the hire charges of the sports facilities provided by the LCSD are low and have always been maintained at a level affordable to the general public. The LCSD also offers concessionary rates for designated persons (namely the elderly, full-time students, people under the age of 14, and persons with disabilities together with their carers). Apart from the sports facilities provided by the LCSD, other organisations including schools, non-profit making sports organisations and public housing estates provide different sports facilities. Currently, some non-profit making sports organisations such as NSAs and district sports associations have opened up their sports facilities to the public with hire charges comparable to that of similar public sports facilities. Therefore, we do not have plan to introduce "recreation and sports vouchers" to subsidise members of the public to hire sports facilities run by the private sector at this moment.

(iii) The community halls and community centres of the Home Affairs

Department provide local organisations with venues for holding various community building/involvement activities, including recreational, cultural and sports related events or training courses, etc, and have already been hired from time to time for use as temporary sports venues for holding sports related events or training courses.

(iv) To encourage schools to open up their facilities for sports use, the HAB and Education Bureau (EDB) jointly launched the Opening up School Facilities for Promotion of Sports Development Scheme (the Scheme) in 2017/18 school year. Schools are encouraged, through financial incentives under the Scheme, to open up their facilities such as school halls, activity rooms, playgrounds, sports grounds and classrooms, for use by NSAs and their affiliated members, district sports associations, sports organisations subvented by the LCSD and other eligible non-profit organisations, to hold sports programmes during non-school hours. Participating schools may levy hire charges as provided under the prevailing guidelines issued by the EDB. They will also receive an additional subsidy from the HAB and the EDB to cover expenses incurred in opening up school facilities and to replace or acquire items required for sports programmes. The Scheme has been well received by the sports sector and schools since its launch. Details of participation in the Scheme since 2017/18 school year are as follows:

School Year	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20*	2020/21*
Number of participating schools	134	136	132	126
Number of schools paired with sports organisations	12	27	48	45
Number of sports organisations paired up with schools	15	20	28	33
Number of programmes	38	162	123	168
Number of attendances	1 333	3 392	5 207	5 705

*Schools were suspended most of the time in 2019/20 and 2020/21 school years to avoid social contact and reduce the risk of infection during the COVID-19 pandemic. The sports programmes originally planned to be held in schools were thus affected.