

Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Wah Sui House, Tin Wah Estate, Tin Shui Wai

The Government today (May 25) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective from 5.30pm under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tin Shui Wai (i.e. Wah Sui House, Tin Wah Estate, Tin Shui Wai, see Annex) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at around 10am tomorrow (May 26). The operation may be extended depending on test results.

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. Having reviewed a basket of factors, including the viral load in sewage, the information of relevant positive cases, and other circumstantial factors, and conducted a risk assessment, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 11.30pm today. Arrangements will be made for persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo a nucleic acid test at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will make arrangement to facilitate specimen collection for people with impaired mobility. All persons in the "restricted area" who have tested positive in the past 14 days, including positive cases identified either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests that have been self-declared to the DH, are not required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise.

The Government spokesman said, "We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons

subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around 10am tomorrow. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to individuals who are not residents in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his/her personal information for contact purposes.

According to the compulsory testing notice to be issued today, any persons other than those specified above who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from May 19 to May 25, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before May 27, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

The Housing Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2448 1723) which started operation at 5.30pm today for residents restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance. The Social Welfare Department will also provide assistance to the affected persons.

The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$10,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified

“restricted area” in Hing Wan House, Sui Wo Court, Sha Tin

The Government today (May 25) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" (declaration) effective from 5.30pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Sha Tin (i.e. Hing Wan House, Sui Wo Court, Sha Tin, see Annex) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at around noon tomorrow (May 26). The operation may be extended depending on test results.

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. Having reviewed a basket of factors, including the viral load in sewage, the information of relevant positive cases, and other circumstantial factors, and conducted a risk assessment, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 11.30pm today. Arrangements will be made for persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo a nucleic acid test at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will make arrangement to facilitate specimen collection for people with impaired mobility. All persons in the "restricted area" who have tested positive in the past 14 days, including positive cases identified either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests that have been self-declared to the DH, are not required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise.

The Government spokesman said, "We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around noon tomorrow. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to individuals who are not residents in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his/her personal information for contact purposes.

According to the compulsory testing notice to be issued today, any persons other than those specified above who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from May 19 to May 25, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before May 27, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$10,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

[LCQ17: Licensing Examination of Medical Council of Hong Kong](#)

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 25):

Question:

It is learnt that in the past two years, the various parts of the licensing examination (LE) administered by the Medical Council of Hong Kong (MCHK) were repeatedly cancelled due to the epidemic. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether it knows the number of candidates who passed LE and obtained the practising qualifications in each of the past 10 years;
- (2) whether it knows the respective numbers of candidates who completed the

various parts of LE (namely Examination in Professional Knowledge, Proficiency Test in Medical English, and Clinical Examination) in each of the past five years;

(3) whether it knows the number of candidates who were affected by the cancellation of LEs in the past two years, and whether the authorities and MCHK have provided such persons with the necessary support; if they have, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(4) given that MCHK has cancelled the Clinical Examination originally scheduled for this month on the grounds of the epidemic again, and quite a number of medical practitioners are concerned that the cancellation of the examination by MCHK when the epidemic has subsided will further delay the manpower supply of medical practitioners, whether the Government has gained an understanding from MCHK about the biggest difficulty faced by it in holding the examination this month as scheduled; and

(5) whether it has assessed the impacts of repeated cancellation of LEs on the manpower supply of medical practitioners; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

As a statutory professional regulatory body, the Medical Council of Hong Kong (MCHK) acts in accordance with its functions under the law, including the conduct of Licensing Examination (LE) to enable non-locally trained doctors to obtain full registration in Hong Kong.

In consultation with the MCHK, the reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Hoi-yan is as follows:

(1) The numbers of candidates who passed the LE of the MCHK in the past 10 years (i.e. for the period from 2012 to 2021) are as follows:

Year	Number of candidates
2012	47
2013	46
2014	74
2015	40
2016	41
2017	53
2018	51
2019	53
2020	0 (Note)

2021	34 (Note) (Only the relevant number of candidates in the 2021 LE (Second Sitting) is included)
------	---

(2) The LE of the MCHK comprises three parts, namely Part I: Examination in Professional Knowledge; Part II: Proficiency Test in Medical English; and Part III: Clinical Examination. The Clinical Examination covers four disciplines, namely medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology and paediatrics. Candidates must pass Part I and Part II before applying to sit for Part III.

The numbers of candidates who sat for the various parts of the LE of the MCHK and the numbers of those who passed the examination in the past five years (i.e. for the period from 2017 to 2021) are as follows:

Year	Part I: Examination in Professional Knowledge		Part II: Proficiency Test in Medical English		Part III: Clinical Examination	
	Number who sat the examination	Number who passed the examination	Number who sat the examination	Number who passed the examination	Number who sat the examination	Number who passed the examination
2017 (First Sitting)	109	31	45	40	63	27
2017 (Second Sitting)	116	29	44	44	63	26
2018 (First Sitting)	122	24	52	48	54	25
2018 (Second Sitting)	117	40	56	46	56	26
2019 (First Sitting)	145	53	80	58	70	21
2019 (Second Sitting)	124	18	69	61	70	32
2020 (First Sitting)	Examination cancelled					
2020 (Second Sitting)						
2021 (First Sitting)	106	42	60	60	Examination cancelled	
2021 (Second Sitting)	73	27	28	19	68	34

(3) Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, the MCHK cancelled the two LEs originally scheduled for 2020, Part III: Clinical Examination of the 2021 LE (First Sitting) and Part III: Clinical Examination of the 2022 LE (First Sitting).

For the two LEs (Part I and Part II) originally scheduled for 2020, each received about 150 applications from eligible candidates. Even if the two examinations were not cancelled, due to the epidemic development, various quarantine requirements and border control restrictions, the actual number of candidates coming to Hong Kong for the examinations might have been smaller than that number.

For Part III: Clinical Examination, four sittings were cancelled, namely the 2020 LE (First and Second Sittings), the 2021 LE (First Sitting) and the 2022 LE (First Sitting). As the MCHK cancelled these examinations before the application periods, there was no information on the respective numbers of candidates.

According to the MCHK's current guidelines on the validity of passes, candidates who have passed Part I and Part II may apply to sit for Part III: Clinical Examination up to five times within five years. In addition, a candidate who has passed three out of the four disciplines in Part III in one go can retain those passes for one further attempt for the failed discipline in either of the following two scheduled sittings.

As the two LEs scheduled for 2020 and Part III: Clinical Examination of the 2021 LE (First Sitting) and the 2022 LE (First Sitting) were cancelled, the MCHK has accordingly extended the validity of relevant passes obtained by the candidates in different parts of the LE.

(4) and (5) Having regard to the drastic deterioration of the epidemic situation in the fifth wave of the COVID-19 in Hong Kong, and the need to safeguard public health and safety while ensuring the smooth operation of LEs, the MCHK has decided to cancel Part III: Clinical Examination of the 2022 LE (First Sitting) scheduled for May 2022.

The Government has been closely monitoring the supply of doctors and adopting a multi-pronged approach to address the shortage of doctors in our healthcare system. Apart from continuously increasing the number of local medical training places, the Government has also been actively seeking to attract qualified non-locally trained doctors to practise in Hong Kong through various means, including improving the LE arrangements; enhancing the attractiveness of limited registration; promoting the various registration pathways to persons residing outside Hong Kong and amending the Medical Registration Ordinance (Cap. 161) to create a new pathway for non-locally trained doctors to obtain full registration in Hong Kong as an alternative to the current pathway of passing the LE, subject to certain criteria being met. The Government also announced the first batch of 27 recognised medical qualifications in end April 2022.

The Government will continue to maintain close liaison with the MCHK to ensure that it will continue to conduct the LE regularly for qualified non-locally trained doctors to obtain full registration in Hong Kong.

Note: Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, the MCHK cancelled the two LEs originally scheduled for 2020 as well as the 2021 LE (First Sitting).

Government follows up on positive results of sewage surveillance and appeals to residents to undergo virus testing

The Government announced today (May 25) that in order to fight the coronavirus epidemic, the Environmental Protection Department and the Drainage Services Department have been collecting sewage samples for virus testing in all districts, and had detected positive results in some areas, indicating that there may be hidden cases in the premises within these areas.

Rapid test

As regards positive sewage testing results with relatively high viral loads in the following areas, the Housing Department and the respective District Offices will commence distributing about 180 000 sets of the COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) kits to residents, cleaning workers and property management staff working in the following areas for them to take the test on their own, in order to help identify infected persons:

- Islands District – The Visionary, Century Link and Century Link II
- Sha Tin District – Lee On Estate, Saddle Ridge Garden, Kam Ying Court, Monte Vista, Kam Lung Court, Park Belvedere and The Met. Blossom
- Kwai Tsing District – Kwai Chung Plaza, Yee Fat Building, Shui King Building, Kam Shek Building, Kwai Po Building, Kwai Lai Building, Kam Wa Building, Kwai Fu Building, Tin On House, Sin Hua Bank Building, Kam Luk Building, Kwai Fat Building and Kwok Po Building

Members of the public may refer to (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/rat/eng/rat.html) for enquiries relating to the use of the RAT kits.

When using an RAT kit, please pay attention to and follow the instructions from the manufacturer to perform the test and read the result properly. It is advisable to record the displayed result by taking a photo immediately after reading. Users should wash their hands before and after performing the tests, and avoid placing non-essential items within the specimen collection area. After completing the test, wrap and seal all components of the test kit carefully and dispose of them properly. If the household environment is contaminated during the specimen collecting process,

disinfection should be conducted with 1 in 49 diluted bleach solution or 70 per cent alcohol.

People who obtained a positive result through an RAT for the first time can report via the online platform "Declaration System for individuals tested positive for COVID-19 using Rapid Antigen Test" (www.chp.gov.hk/ratp). If individuals encounter difficulties using the online platform, they can call the automated system at 183 6119 to register their identification document and telephone number. The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health will contact the relevant person later to finish the report procedure.

LCQ20: Vaccination requirements for persons arriving in Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Lai Tung-kwok and a written reply by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 25):

Question:

In accordance with the current requirements of the Government, all persons arriving in Hong Kong from foreign places have to provide recognised vaccination records, and the types of vaccines administered as well as the places or organisations issuing the vaccination records must respectively be on the "List of COVID-19 Vaccines Recognised for Specified Purposes" (List of Recognised Vaccines) and the "List of Places or Organisations of Issuance of Recognised Vaccination Records" (Recognised List). There are views pointing out that even though the Government has relaxed the infection control requirements since the 1st of this month to allow non-Hong Kong residents to enter Hong Kong, it has not concurrently expanded the respective scopes of the List of Recognised Vaccines and the Recognised List. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the average time taken from the commencement of the negotiation to the conclusion of an agreement between the Government and each of the places or organisations on the recognition of vaccination records since the introduction of the Recognised List;

(2) of the places or organisations with which it is negotiating on the recognition of vaccination records, and whether it has anticipated (i) the respective time needed for reaching relevant agreements and (ii) the number of recognised places or organisations that can be added by the end of this year;

(3) as it is learnt that a number of vaccines not included on the List of

Recognised Vaccines have been granted full authorisation or emergency authorisation for use by quite a number of countries or places, whether the Government has plans to include such vaccines on the List of Recognised Vaccines; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) given that if the vaccination records currently held by Hong Kong permanent residents are not issued by the places or organisations on the Recognised List, they cannot board any flights for Hong Kong even though the vaccines that they have administered are approved by the Government, whether the Government has plans to relax the entry requirements for these residents shortly, such that they will be allowed to board the flights for Hong Kong irrespective of their places of departure and the places or organisations issuing the vaccination records; if so, of the details and implementation timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The global epidemic situation is still ongoing. Hong Kong continues to prevent the importation of cases under the policy direction of dynamic "zero infection", and implements stringent prevention and control measures for persons arriving from overseas places. Under the prevailing inbound control measure requirements, all persons arriving from overseas places can only board a flight for Hong Kong if they are fully vaccinated and hold recognised vaccination records.

Recognised vaccination records include (1) vaccination records issued by Hong Kong, (2) vaccination records or certifications issued by Mainland or Macao authorities or an institution recognised by Mainland or Macao authorities (including Chinese Embassies or Consulates General overseas), (3) vaccination records or certifications issued by an authority or recognised institution of a country where its national regulatory authority is designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a stringent regulatory authority (SRA), (4) vaccination records or certifications issued by a relevant authority or recognised institution of a country with which Hong Kong has reached a recognition agreement arrangement with its government, or (5) vaccination records issued by an organisation with which Hong Kong has reached a recognition agreement arrangement. In respect of (3), the 27 member states of the European Union (EU) are countries where their national regulatory authorities have been designated by the WHO as SRAs, and the EU Digital COVID Certificate (EU DCC) mechanism has already been implemented among EU member states. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government also accepts vaccination records recognised under the EU DCC mechanism as recognised vaccination records required for the purpose of boarding flights for Hong Kong from overseas places.

Fully vaccinated persons means persons who have received the necessary doses as stipulated in guidelines of a COVID-19 vaccination course 14 days prior to their arrival in Hong Kong. The vaccines administered for the relevant persons have to be vaccines listed on the Government's List of

COVID-19 Vaccines Recognised for Specified Purposes.

As for lifting the ban on non-Hong Kong residents (non-HKRs) entering Hong Kong, the Government explained when announcing the arrangement earlier that the relevant restriction was originally intended to limit the volume of inbound passengers from overseas places, but considering that the public health risk associated with non-HKRs is the same with that of HKRs coming from the same places, that the overall volume of inbound passengers is controlled by the number of designated quarantine hotels (DQHs), and that overseas inbound passengers are still subject to stringent inbound control measures, the Government, under the premise that the risks could be properly managed, has allowed non-HKRs who have stayed in overseas places in the past 14 days to enter Hong Kong and be subject to the same boarding, quarantine and testing arrangements as HKRs, and to undergo compulsory quarantine in DQHs under closed-loop management upon arriving at Hong Kong.

The reply to the various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) and (2) The Government has been in discussion with various places on the arrangements for the recognition of vaccination records. In general, the HKSAR Government would invite Consulates General of various places to provide relevant information on their vaccination records, including samples of vaccination records, brands of vaccines locally administered, verification methods of vaccination records, whether digital or paper-based records are issued, etc. Consulates General of some places would also proactively approach the HKSAR Government to provide the above information. As the time taken for the governments or the Consulates General of various places to provide the above information varies, the time taken for the HKSAR Government to conduct discussions with the Consulates General of various places is also different. In general, upon the provision of aforementioned information by the Consulates General, subject to review and verification, the HKSAR Government would recognise the concerned records, and would update and announce the List of Places or Organisations of Issuance of Recognised Vaccination Records accordingly.

As of May 25, 2022, the List of Places or Organisations of Issuance of Recognised Vaccination Records has included 116 places or organisations of issuance of recognised vaccination records, including the vast majority of places which have frequent contact with Hong Kong, including the Mainland, Macao, Australia, Canada, member states of the EU, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, Vietnam, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, etc. As per the figures of visitor arrivals in Hong Kong in 2019, over 95 per cent of visitor arrivals were from places which are currently on the List. On the other hand, the Government is still waiting for the replies from around 20 places regarding information on vaccination records.

(3) As regards the List of COVID-19 Vaccines Recognised for Specified Purposes (the List), apart from the COVID-19 vaccines already recognised for use in Hong Kong, vaccines on the WHO Emergency Use Listing or Pre-

qualification lists, vaccines recognised for use by Stringent Regulatory Authorities as designated by the WHO or the National Medical Products Administration, as well as vaccines recommended by the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases joined by the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel are also listed. In fact, in addition to the two COVID-19 vaccines made available in Hong Kong, according to the latest statistics from Our World in Data, vaccines recognised and used by other major countries/economies have already been included in the List. In other words, for the purpose of inbound travels, Hong Kong has recognised nearly all COVID-19 vaccines which are widely used in the world. As regards formulating the above definition for the List, it is to ensure that the COVID-19 vaccines included are safe, efficacious and of good quality. The Government has uploaded the List to the COVID-19 thematic website, and will update the List from time to time.

(4) Under the premise of maintaining the measures to prevent the importation of cases and proper management of risks, the arrangement of recognised vaccination records can help confirm the authenticity of vaccination records held by inbound persons, and provide clarity to inbound persons on the format of records recognised.

The Government will continue to closely monitor the epidemic situation of different places in accordance with the principle of guarding against the importation of cases. A basket of factors, including public health factors such as epidemic situation in particular places, testing rate, vaccination rate, volume of arrivals and actual imported cases, as well as the developments of the local epidemic situation and relevant local socio-economic factors, will be considered under the risk-based principle to adjust the boarding, quarantine and testing requirements for overseas arrivals based on risk levels as the situation warrants.