

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

The Government announced today (May 21) 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:

- North District – Wah Ming Estate, Yung Shing Court and King Shing Court
- Tsuen Wan District – Luk Yeung Sun Chuen, Shek Wai Kok Estate and Cheung Shan Estate

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.

Government to implement Vaccine Pass arrangement in designated healthcare premises

To strengthen the immunity barrier for hospitals and public healthcare facilities against COVID-19, protect members of the public who utilise public healthcare services, especially senior citizens and chronic patients who face a higher risk of serious illness and death after COVID-19 infection, and further encourage members of the public to receive COVID-19 vaccination, the Government announced today (May 21) that starting from June 13, the Vaccine Pass arrangement will be implemented in designated healthcare premises under the Food and Health Bureau, the Department of Health (DH) and the Hospital Authority (HA) through administrative methods. Persons who are unvaccinated will be allowed to visit applicable healthcare premises under the Vaccine Pass and receive general medical services after obtaining the negative result proof of a nucleic acid test. The Vaccine Pass arrangement will not be applicable to healthcare premises providing emergency or urgent medical services.

Designated healthcare premises subject to Vaccine Pass

The Vaccine Pass arrangement is applicable to the following designated healthcare premises primarily providing non-emergency or non-urgent medical services through appointments:

- (1) HA's specialist out-patient clinics;
- (2) Student Health Service Centres and Special Assessment Centres;
- (3) Woman Health Centres;
- (4) Oral Health Education Resource Centre;
- (5) Travel Health Centres;
- (6) Red Ribbon Centre;
- (7) Health Promotion Branch Regional Offices;
- (8) Methadone Clinics;
- (9) Families Clinics;
- (10) Government Dental Clinics and Orthodontic Clinics;
- (11) Integrated Care Centre for Civil Service;
- (12) District Health Centres (DHC); and
- (13) DHC Expresses.

Healthcare premises not subject to Vaccine Pass

To ensure that emergency or urgent medical services are not affected, the Vaccine Pass arrangement is not applicable to healthcare premises providing emergency or urgent services and healthcare premises providing episodic disease treatments, including the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments, HA's general out-patient clinics, Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres under the HA, DH's Maternal and Child Health Centres, Elderly Health Centres, School Dental Clinics, Genetic Counselling Clinic, Genetic Screening Clinic, Chest Clinics and X-ray Centre, Social Hygiene Clinics, AIDS Counselling and Testing Service, Integrated Treatment Centre and Child Assessment Centres. Persons who enter the aforementioned healthcare premises (including service users and visitors) are not required to use the Vaccine Pass.

Separately, for some HA healthcare premises providing essential services for service users, such as haemodialysis centres, day chemotherapy centres and geriatric day hospitals, these healthcare premises have currently implemented a same-day rapid antigen test (RAT) arrangement with regard to the condition of service users as an anti-epidemic measure. The Vaccine Pass arrangement is also not applicable to this category of healthcare premises.

Applicable persons for designated healthcare premises subject to Vaccine Pass

The Vaccine Pass arrangement implemented in designated healthcare premises will be applicable to service users and visitors (including those accompanying the service users) with the following details respectively:

- (1) If the service users are compliant with the Vaccine Pass requirements (please refer to the thematic website www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/vp_t1_ENG.pdf for details), including having received the required dosage of COVID-19 vaccine, being recovered persons of COVID-19 in the Government's record, or certified by doctors for being unsuitable to receive vaccination, and holding the relevant vaccination record (including record of recovered person) or medical exemption certificate, they may receive service at designated healthcare premises.
- (2) If service users are not compliant with the Vaccine Pass requirements, they may present a negative result proof of a polymerase chain reaction (PCR)-based nucleic acid test conducted with specimen collected within 48 hours before the visit in lieu of the Vaccine Pass, for receiving service at designated healthcare premises.
- (3) Visitors (including carers of service users) are required to comply with the Vaccine Pass requirements in order to enter designated healthcare premises and cannot use a pre-visit test as an alternative arrangement.

Vaccine Pass implementation details

Service users and visitors receiving service at designated healthcare

premises are required to present on the request of premises staff members their vaccination record (including recovery record), medical exemption certificate (as applicable) or the negative result proof of a nucleic acid test (only applicable to service users) for checking by premises staff members. However, they are not required to scan the Vaccine Pass QR code.

If service users and visitors enter the designated healthcare premises for services relevant to the prevention and control of COVID-19 such as collecting RAT kits, undergoing COVID-19 testing or receiving COVID-19 vaccination, they are exempted from the Vaccine Pass arrangement.

The Government emphasised that patients' welfare is the prime concern of the Vaccine Pass arrangement. The relevant administrative arrangements will not impede patients and the injured in need to receive emergency or urgent medical services.

A Government spokesman said that there is generally a higher risk of serious illness and even death if chronic patients are infected with COVID-19, and ensuring the normal operation of healthcare premises is an important part of Hong Kong's anti-epidemic measures. Therefore, it is necessary to build a protective shield for medical staff and patients in healthcare premises.

"Vaccination is highly effective in preventing severe cases or deaths from COVID-19 infections. It also helps tackle different COVID-19 variants. We strongly appeal to members of the public who have not been vaccinated, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a much higher fatality risk after COVID-19 infection, to get vaccinated with no delay for the sake of their health. Members of the public who are currently eligible for a third or fourth dose should also receive the dose as soon as possible to build an immunity barrier for Hong Kong," the spokesman said.

[CE and three Principal Officials meet and exchange views with MSSY appointees \(with photos\)](#)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam; the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit; the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui; and the Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan, today (May 21) met and exchanged views with 70 appointees appointed to government advisory committees through the Member Self-recommendation Scheme for Youth (MSSY) at the Government House, the Cyberport, the Central Government Offices and the Youth Square respectively. During the exchange, they learnt about the appointees' experience in

participating in the work of the committees.

To provide more opportunities for young people to participate in policy discussions, the current-term Government launched the Pilot Member Self-recommendation Scheme for Youth in late October 2017 for young people aged between 18 and 35 and committed to serve the community to self-nominate themselves to join the Government's advisory and statutory bodies (ASBs). From 2018 onwards, the Scheme has been regularised and extended to cover more advisory boards and committees.

Every recruitment under the MSSY has seen overwhelming response. So far, five phases of the MSSY have been launched with over 8 200 applications being received. The application of the latest MSSY Phase V ended in mid-March this year and the relevant assessment is now underway. In addition to the seats open for recruitment under the MSSY, the Government has invited those applicants attending the interviews to authorise the Home Affairs Bureau to include their personal particulars in the Central Personality Index database so that relevant bureaux and departments may retrieve the information for reference during their selection of candidates for appointment as members of ASBs. Since the implementation of the MSSY, about 480 posts are held by young people who have been appointed to ASBs directly or indirectly through the Scheme. With the concerted effort of Directors of Bureaux and Secretaries of Departments, the ratio of youth members in these bodies has increased from 7.8 per cent in end-2017 when the MSSY launched, to 15.4 per cent in end-2021. The target of 15 per cent set by the current-term Government has been successfully achieved.

Mrs Lam said, "Young people are the most energetic and creative demographic in our society who possess the greatest potential to drive the community forward. We are pleased to talk to several dozen youth members appointed to government advisory committees under the MSSY today. We are impressed by these young people from all walks of life for their enthusiasm to inject new ideas during policy making, and their commitment to promote a stable development of the society.

"I hope the MSSY will continue to attract talents through regularly offering seats of committees on policy areas of greater interests and concerns to young people, thus enabling more young people with a commitment to serve the community to join the Scheme and to realise their full potential."





Speech by SCED at APEC MRT-ABAC Public-Private Dialogue on Free Trade Area of Asia Pacific (English only)

Following is the speech by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ministers Responsible for Trade (MRT)-APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) Public-Private Dialogue on the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) in the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond in Bangkok, Thailand today (May 21):

Good morning, Honourable Chair (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce of Thailand, Mr Jurin Laksanawisit), fellow Ministers, and friends from ABAC.

My sincere thanks to the Government of Thailand for hosting this Public-Private Dialogue and for the warm hospitality extended to all of us. Words cannot express my excitement to meet you all in-person today in Bangkok, rekindling face-to-face dialogues with members of the APEC family, after a long wait of two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I would like to begin by echoing fellow Ministers in reaffirming Hong Kong, China (HKC)'s support for APEC's long-term efforts of advancing towards the realisation of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP), a shared aspiration that we hold very dear to our hearts, especially as we work towards economic recovery beyond the pandemic.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s recent statement, global growth is estimated to decelerate markedly from 6.1 per cent in 2021 to 3.6 per cent in 2022 and 2023, and maybe to decline even further beyond 2023. APEC, representing economies accounting for more than 60 per cent of the world's GDP, has a compelling responsibility to take the lead in turning the tide.

To build strength and boost confidence for the trade and the well-being of our people, the time is ripe to reinvigorate and recalibrate our FTAAP agenda. As the saying goes, "there is good in every evil". The pandemic has indeed taught us many lessons and transformed our way of lives in many ways. We have learned the importance of integrated supply chains and experienced an irreversible global trend of digitalisation. There is great value in exploring how regional economic integration can be shaped to support supply chains in withstanding future shocks and to unlock the unprecedented opportunities of digital trade.

2022 is a milestone year for FTAAP, not only because of the sweeping transformation of our global trade landscape, but also thanks to the entry into force of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) on January 1 which has provided a fertile ground for the Asia-Pacific region to pursue broader and deeper integration. HKC embraces the vision and objective in the formation of the RCEP. We enjoy very strong bonds with the 15 RCEP participating economies, sharing bilateral trade totalling US\$963 billion in 2021. As I have mentioned on many occasions, HKC is ready and keen to join and contribute to RCEP in the soonest possible future, getting a step closer to the construction of FTAAP. I feel most encouraged by how ABAC has backed new entrants to these significant FTAAP pathways, through the strong statement they recently made on FTAAP. HKC fully echoes ABAC's call that the eventual FTAAP should be high-quality, comprehensive and able to incorporate and address next-generation trade and investment issues.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have come a long way since the vision of FTAAP was first broached by ABAC almost two decades ago. APEC member economies must live up to the expectations of our business communities who look upon us for early and concrete deliverables along the parallel paths towards economic recovery and the realisation of FTAAP. The journey will not be easy, but HKC is always prepared to constructively contribute to charting incremental and continuous steps to turn FTAAP into reality.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Thailand, our APEC Host this year, for initiating a refreshed conversation on this important topic at this timely juncture. I look forward to a fruitful exchange with fellow Ministers and our business leaders at today's Dialogue, which can hopefully lead to the setting of some clear milestones or "early harvest" opportunities in the areas of convergence before we meet again in November this year.

Thank you.

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