

Hospital Authority welcomes legislation to control alternative smoking products in operation

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) welcomed the Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 in operation today (April 30), which helps safeguard public health by discouraging the consumption of alternative smoking products and minimise the impact of passive smoking on the public.

Dr David Chao, Chairman of the Working Group on Smoking Counselling and Cessation Programme of the Coordinating Committee in Family Medicine of the HA, said, "Both e-cigarette and heat-not-burn products will emit toxic substances. Some of these harmful substances will lead to cell damage and could increase the risk of cancer, besides the harm caused to others by passive smoking."

Dr Chao added that smokers who are infected with COVID-19 will likely be affected more severely than ordinary patients. The HA appeals to smokers to quit smoking immediately to minimise the chances of developing severe smoking-related illnesses. Smoking can lead to various serious conditions such as lung cancer, heart diseases, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and stroke.

The HA operates 70 smoking counselling and cessation centres. The service is delivered by a multidisciplinary team through professional assessment, counselling and follow up services to help smokers quit the smoking habit. Appropriate treatment plans will be formulated upon assessment of the nicotine dependency level of the smokers. The centres also provide information and advice to relatives and friends who wish to help the smokers quit smoking.

Government enforces "restriction-testing declaration" and compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Fung Tak Estate,

Diamond Hill

The Government yesterday (April 29) 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 4pm yesterday, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Diamond Hill (i.e. Toi Fung House, Fung Tak Estate, Diamond Hill, excluding non-domestic units on G/F) were 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. All persons in the "restricted area" who had tested positive in the past three months, including positive cases identified either by nucleic acid tests that have been recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests (RAT) that had been self-declared to the DH, were not required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise.

In addition, the Government issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday to any person other than those specified above who had been present at the building for more than two hours from April 23 to April 29, 2022, to undergo compulsory testing on or before May 1, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect. The Government finished the compulsory testing exercise at around 7am today (April 30) and is now carrying out enforcement actions in the "restricted area" to verify that all people in the "restricted area" have undergone compulsory testing. The Government will further announce the revocation time of the declaration.

Starting from around 7am today, persons in the specified "restricted area" in Diamond Hill who have undergone testing and are able to present SMS notifications with negative test results as proof of having undergone testing may leave the "restricted area" through the designated exit after providing personal information to a prescribed officer.

The Government set up temporary specimen collection stations in the "restricted area" yesterday and requested persons subject to compulsory testing to collect combined nasal and throat swab samples at the stations to undergo a COVID-19 virus test before 9pm yesterday. Around 1520 people within the "restricted area" had undergone testing, among which six cases tested positive and one indeterminate case were found. The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health will arrange to follow up.

Regarding cases tested positive in the specified "restricted area", the Government has provided additional food packs, health advice for persons tested positive pending admission to hospitals or isolation facilities, disinfection products and surgical masks to these persons and their household members pending follow-up arrangement.

Moreover, the Government also assigned staff to visit around 880 households within the "restricted area", among which 197 households did not answer the door. The Government will take measures to follow up.

The Government reiterates that enforcement actions will be taken seriously. Any person who fails to present an SMS notification with a test result or wear a wristband as proof of having undergone testing breaches the compulsory testing notice and may be liable to a fine of \$10,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/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.

Territory-wide flag-selling activity cancelled

The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has been informed by International Social Service (Hong Kong Branch) that the territory-wide flag-selling activity in public places scheduled to be held today (April 30) has been cancelled, a spokesman for the SWD said.

Details of the charitable fund-raising activities covered by the Public Subscription Permit issued by the SWD, including any updated information, have been published on the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/theme/fundraising/search).

For enquiries, please contact Ms Fung of the organisation at 2835 7502.

Murder in Tin Shui Wai

Police are investigating a murder case in Tin Shui Wai yesterday (April 29) morning in which a 30-year-old woman died.

At about 6am yesterday, Police received a report that a man was dragging a human-like object outside 70 Tin Ha Road.

Police officers sped to the scene and found the 25-year-old man and his 30-year-old girlfriend. The woman, sustaining head injuries and multiple

bruise marks over the body, was certified dead at scene.

Initial investigation revealed that the deceased had been suspectedly attacked in a unit on Tin Ha Road. The case is classified as murder. The man who was in suspected connection with the case was arrested and is being detained for further enquiries.

Post-mortem examinations will be conducted later to ascertain the cause of death of the deceased.

Active investigation by the District Crime Squad of Yuen Long District is underway.

Enhancement measures and extension of the Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for Environmental Hygiene and Security Staff in the Property Management Sector (with photos)

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) under the Home Affairs Bureau announced today (April 29) that the Government will launch enhancement measures with immediate effect for the Anti-epidemic Support Scheme for Environmental Hygiene and Security Staff in the Property Management Sector (ASPM) under the Anti-epidemic Fund, including providing additional quotas for each eligible building block, providing administration fee to the property management companies (PMCs), Deed of Mutual Covenant Managers (DMC Managers) or Owners' Corporations/Organisations (OCs/OOs) of the relevant buildings, and extending the application period to May 31.

The Acting Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Jack Chan, visited the Property Management Services Authority (PMSA), which has been implementing the ASPM, this afternoon to show support to their staff who are responsible for handling the applications for the ASPM. "The ASPM has been well-received by the property management (PM) sector and frontline PM workers since its launch. I would like to thank the PMSA colleagues for taking up the task of processing applications positively and promptly, such that the ASPM is implemented smoothly. We have been keeping in view the needs of the PM sector and communicating with the trade. Given the large number of eligible applicants, we would enhance the ASPM and extend the application deadline, with a view to benefiting more PM workers", said Mr Chan.

The enhancement measures introduced to the ASPM include providing an

additional quota not exceeding 100 for frontline cleansing and security staff engaged by premises within each eligible building block (including private residential, composite (i.e. commercial cum residential), industrial and commercial (including shopping malls) building block), as well as part-time/leave relief cleansing/security workers of service contractors/subcontractors serving each eligible building block (i.e. the total quota of each eligible building block has been increased from not exceeding 100 to not exceeding 200).

The aforementioned frontline PM workers should submit applications via the PMCs/DMC Managers/OCs/OOs of the relevant building blocks. Considering the administrative and co-ordination work involved, the HAD will provide an administration fee to PMCs/DMC Managers/OCs/OOs, at a rate of \$100 per month per frontline PM worker for whom they have successfully applied under the ASPM. As the subsidised period for ASPM is 5-month (i.e. February to June 2022), PMCs/DMC Managers/OCs/OOs can receive a maximum of \$500 for each frontline PM worker for whom they have successfully applied. For frontline PM workers whose applications have been approved earlier, the HAD will also provide administration fee at the same rate to the PMCs/DMC Managers/OCs/OOs concerned. Mr Chan said, "We believe that the administrative fee will incentivise PMCs, OCs, etc to actively submit applications for PM workers."

In the light of the aforementioned enhancement measures, in order to provide PMCs/DMC Managers/OCs/OOs sufficient time to prepare for applications, the application deadline for the ASPM will be extended from April 30 to May 31, 2022.

Since the onset of the fifth wave of the epidemic, frontline PM workers have all along been at the forefront of anti-epidemic work and committed to their work to maintain the environmental hygiene and safety of the residents of the buildings. The HAD appeals strongly to PMCs/DMC Managers/OCs/OOs to uphold corporate social responsibility and civic responsibility, following an inclusive and fair principle, and submit applications for all frontline PM workers serving eligible building blocks (including premises therein), so as to give recognition to their committed efforts. PMCs/DMC Managers/OCs/OOs should also ensure the subsidies are disbursed to the frontline PM workers, and must not deduct the wages and welfare to which the frontline PM workers are entitled under the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57) and/or employment contracts.

The PMSA has expedited the processing of applications received, with a view to benefiting PMCs/DMC Managers/OCs/OOs and frontline PM workers swiftly. As at April 28, the PMSA has received over 14 000 applications, which will benefit nearly 120 000 frontline PM workers, and over 1 260 applications have been approved, involving over \$300 million subsidy, benefiting over 3 280 buildings.

For details on the ASPM, please contact the PMSA at 3696 1156 or 3696 1166, or visit the website of the PMSA (www.pmsahk.org.hk).

