

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme statistics

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme has been implemented for the 41st day since February 26, 2021.

So far, about 659 600 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered for members of the public (please see Annex 1). Among them, about 516 000 persons have received their first dose, with about 336 200 persons receiving the Sinovac vaccine and about 179 800 persons receiving the BioNTech vaccine. About 143 600 persons have received their second dose, with about 104 100 persons receiving the Sinovac vaccine and about 39 500 persons receiving the BioNTech vaccine.

In the last 24 hours ending at 8pm today (April 7), the following vaccination and booking figures were recorded:

- (i) About 3 100 persons received their first dose of the Sinovac vaccine, including about 1 800 persons vaccinated at eight Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) and about 1 300 persons at private doctors and clinics participating in the programme;
- (ii) about 14 700 persons received their second dose of the Sinovac vaccine, including about 7 700 persons vaccinated at the CVCs and about 7 000 persons at private doctors and clinics;
- (iii) about 10 200 persons received their first dose of the BioNTech vaccine at 21 CVCs, and about 15 600 persons received their second dose of the BioNTech vaccine;
- (iv) the overall percentage of people who have received the Sinovac vaccine at the eight CVCs is about 97 per cent; while the overall percentage of people who have received the BioNTech vaccine at the 21 CVCs is about 98 per cent; and
- (v) about 3 000 persons have made online bookings for receiving their first and second doses of the Sinovac vaccine, while about 15 600 persons have made online bookings for receiving their first and second doses of the BioNTech vaccine.

In the last 24 hours ending at 0.00am today, there were eight cases of ambulance transfers to hospitals. Among them, five persons were discharged, two persons were admitted for observation and one person was discharged against medical advice (please see Annex 2).

As background information, in the last 24 hours ending at 0.00am today, there were 38 cases of stroke or myocardial infarction that required admission to the Intensive Care Unit, Acute Stroke Unit and Cardiac Care Unit

of public hospitals. The state of new cases admitted to the wards concerned is provided as a cross reference to enhance fuller public understanding of cases of the kind recorded on vaccine recipients.

Government gazettes compulsory testing notice

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

Currently, in all districts in Hong Kong, if one or more new confirmed cases are found in the residential buildings (including buildings for both commercial and residential uses), or there are sewage samples tested positive, or there are other factors which implied possible infection risks, the buildings will be included in the compulsory testing notice.

Two premises fulfilling the above criteria are included in the compulsory testing notice today (April 7).

Details of the compulsory testing notice are as follows:

Any person who had been present at any specified premises listed in Annex 1 for more than two hours at any time during the period from March 25 to April 7, 2021 (including but not limited to visitors, residents and workers), have to undergo testing by April 9, 2021. If persons subject to compulsory testing have previously undergone testing between April 5 and April 7, 2021, they would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notice.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau reminds the public that in accordance with the compulsory testing notice issued earlier, all household members of close contacts are required to undergo compulsory testing. Any person who had lived with a person placed under quarantine pursuant to section 22 of the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) (person under quarantine) in the same residential unit on the date of commencement of quarantine or during the 14 days before that day, and who becomes aware of the quarantine of the person under quarantine when the relevant quarantine has not yet been completed, have to undergo testing within two days of he/she becoming aware of the person under quarantine has been placed under quarantine and report to the Government the result of the test by phone (at 6275 6901), fax (at 2530 5872) or email (ct@csb.gov.hk)

within three days of undergoing the test.

The Government will set up mobile specimen collection stations at the following locations tomorrow (April 8). Please see Annex 2 for details of service scope:

- Covered playground outside King Fu House, Shan King Estate, Tuen Mun
- Open space outside G/F, Oi Fai House (Block 3), Yau Oi Estate, Tuen Mun

The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations in various districts providing free COVID-19 nucleic acid testing services for the general public are stated in Annex 2. Apart from mobile specimen collection stations, persons subject to compulsory testing can also choose to attend any of the community testing centres in all districts to receive testing free of charge. Persons with "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification or SMS notification from the Centre for Health Protection reminding them to undergo testing as soon as possible may receive free testing at community testing centres or mobile specimen collection stations (if service scope is applicable).

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

1. To visit any of the 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 community testing centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en);
3. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from any of the 121 post offices, vending machines set up at 20 MTR stations or 47 designated general outpatient 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);
4. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority;
5. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the Department of Health (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); or
6. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the Centre for Health Protection (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the sample collected as per relevant guidelines.

The spokesman cautioned that testing received at accident and emergency departments of the Hospital Authority or during hospital stays, 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 mobile specimen collection stations or the community testing centres."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notification containing result of the test for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Furthermore, persons subject to testing under the compulsory testing notices should, as far as reasonably practicable, take appropriate personal disease prevention measures including wearing a mask and maintaining hand hygiene, and, unless for the purpose of undergoing the specified test, stay at their place of residence and avoid going out until the test result is ascertained as far as possible.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm. If persons subject to compulsory testing plan to conduct testing at any of the community testing centres, they can check the centre's appointment status in advance. The hotlines of the community testing centres are available at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/info.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to the relevant premises, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. 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 order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). Collection and use of any personal data for conducting COVID-19 tests must meet the requirements under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486). Government departments or testing service providers which handle the relevant information may provide the data to DH or other relevant departments for anti-epidemic purpose as necessary. The workflow does not involve the provision of any personal data to organisations or persons outside Hong Kong.

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 contacted confirmed cases), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."

Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation assesses serious adverse events relating to COVID-19 vaccination

The Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation (Expert Committee) convened a meeting today (April 7) to assess serious adverse events relating to COVID-19 vaccination.

The Department of Health (DH) has been closely monitoring possible adverse events following COVID-19 immunisation. Based on the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO), the DH enhanced the existing surveillance system and carried out active surveillance. Under the surveillance system, the DH monitors Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFIs) and encourages and receives from healthcare providers and pharmaceutical industry AEFI reports of COVID-19 immunisation. The DH also partners with the University of Hong Kong (HKU) to conduct an active surveillance programme for Adverse Events of Special Interest under the COVID-19 Vaccines Adverse Events Response and Evaluation Programme (CARE Programme).

According to reporting criteria of AEFIs endorsed by the Expert Committee, when there are obvious medical causes (including clinical diagnosis and pathological evidence) for certain clinical events including death cases, the healthcare professionals may consider the event not fulfilling the reporting criteria of AEFIs. On the other hand, under the CARE Programme, the DH and the Hospital Authority (HA) have set up mechanism to refer death cases not fulfilling reporting criteria of AEFIs to HKU for surveillance and analysis. The HKU would provide regular reports to the Expert Committee; if unusual pattern is detected, the DH will be notified and the information will be referred to the Expert Committee for assessment as soon as possible. In addition, according to the risk communication plan endorsed by the Expert Committee, figures and summary of clinical events received will be released and updated through the designated website. When suspected adverse event fulfilling the reporting criteria of AEFIs involving death case within 14 days of vaccination is received, it will be announced via press release as soon as possible. An updated report (as at April 4) will be uploaded on April 9.

Up to April 4, the DH had received a total of 15 death case reports with history of COVID-19 immunisation from the HA. These cases involved 11 males and four females between 55 and 80 years old. Existing information indicates

that most of these cases died of cardiovascular diseases. The Expert Committee conducted causality assessment of individual cases based on the algorithm of the WHO and all available information, including the medical conditions and history of the patient with relevant clinical data, vaccine information and preliminary autopsy findings. The Expert Committee has already concluded three of these reports that there was no causal relationship between the deceased's outcome and COVID-19 vaccination. The medical history and/or preliminary autopsy findings of 11 cases showed that the outcomes of the deceased persons were not directly associated with COVID-19 vaccination and the remaining case had history of vaccination 25 days before passed away. Their assessment will be concluded when necessary information is available.

The Expert Committee assessed three of the above 15 cases in today's meeting. The first case, announced on March 11, involved a 67-year-old man who passed away on March 13. The full autopsy report indicated that the patient died of acute myocardial infarction due to coronary atherosclerosis, other investigation results did not reveal any possible immunological reactions due to vaccine. Based on the WHO algorithm, the Expert Committee considered that the causality of the deceased's outcome with COVID-19 vaccination was inconsistent (i.e. no causal relationship). The second case involved a 68-year-old woman who had hypertension, hypothyroidism and lipid disorder. She passed away on March 29 and she received a dose of CoronaVac 26 days before her death (i.e. March 3). Based on the preliminary autopsy findings of acute myocardial infarction, the Expert Committee considered that the deceased's outcome was not directly associated with COVID-19 vaccination. The last case involved a 62-year-old man with history of newly diagnosed hypertension. He passed away on April 2 and he received a dose of CoronaVac 25 days prior to his death (i.e. March 8). The causality assessment will be conducted when preliminary autopsy findings is available.

According to the local mortality data, in the same period (i.e. February 26 to April 4) of 2019, among people aged 55 or above, there were 438 deaths (i.e. 17.2 per 100 000 population) and 716 deaths (28.1 per 100 000 population) due to ischaemic heart diseases and heart disease respectively. The Expert Committee reviewed these data and considered there is no unusual pattern identified so far. The Expert Committee will continue to closely monitor the situation and collect more data for further assessment.

Party organiser and clubhouse licensee relating to dance cluster imprisoned and fined for violations of anti-

epidemic regulation

A licensee of a clubhouse (Palladium International Dance Club) located at 9/F, BCC Building, 25-31 Carnarvon Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, was fined \$48,000 at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (April 7) for contravening the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F). Moreover, a party organiser hiring the above premises was sentenced to two months' imprisonment for contravening the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G).

The courts heard that in September and November last year, the licensee of the clubhouse did not comply with relevant requirements and directions issued by the Secretary for Food and Health in relation to the clubhouse under Cap. 599F. The non-compliance included not having taken all reasonable steps to ensure that all persons within the clubhouse were wearing masks, having arranged live performance at the premises while some performers were not wearing masks, and not having effective buffers between the performers and any guest/audience member. Separately, a party organiser holding a party with about 100 guests on November 16, 2020, at the clubhouse violated the relevant restrictions on group gathering under Cap. 599G. According to earlier information from the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, the clubhouse was related to the outbreak of the dancing-linked cluster at the end of last year.

A spokesman for the Home Affairs Department (HAD) stressed that clubhouses with a Certificate of Compliance issued by the HAD are one of the scheduled premises under Cap. 599F requiring compliance with the relevant requirements and directions issued by the Government. Persons responsible for scheduled premises that contravene the statutory requirements under Cap. 599F would have committed a criminal offence. Offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The HAD will continue to proactively take stringent enforcement actions and step up inspections at clubhouses in various districts across the territory to ensure that the responsible persons of the premises and the patrons strictly comply with relevant provisions in the regulations for the prevention and control of diseases. The Government appeals to members of the public for their full compliance with various anti-epidemic requirements so as to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the community.

FEHD strengthens refuse collection and

sweeping services in islands and rural areas during Easter holidays

To cope with the need of visitors during Easter holidays, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) strengthened refuse collection and sweeping services in islands and rural areas in the past five days (April 2 to April 6) with a total of over 190 tonnes of refuse collected.

A spokesman for the FEHD said today (April 7), "The FEHD collected about 170 tonnes, six tonnes and five tonnes of refuses in Cheung Chau, Tap Mun and Tung Lung Chau respectively, while about 15 tonnes of refuses were collected in other places including Po Toi Island, Sham Chung, Lai Chi Chong, Yim Tin Tsai, Sharp Island and Pak Lap in the past five days,"

"The FEHD noted that many members of the public would visit islands and rural areas during long holidays and hence, taking into account actual situation of different areas, the frequency of cleaning the places and emptying litter containers was increased, and cleansing services were also stepped up to ensure the cleanliness of public places."

The spokesman appealed to members of the public to maintain a hygienic environment and not to litter when visiting islands and rural areas, used masks and waste should also be properly disposed of.