

## **United Christian Hospital announces passing of COVID-19 patient**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesman for United Christian Hospital (UCH) today (February 1) announced that a patient confirmed with COVID-19 passed away yesterday.

An 85-year-old female patient (case number: 8547) was admitted to UCH on December 14 due to terminal illness. She subsequently tested positive for COVID-19. After treatment, the patient tested positive for an antibody and was released from isolation by the Department of Health on January 28. Her condition continued to deteriorate and she eventually succumbed at 9.35am yesterday.

The hospital is saddened about the passing away of the patient and would offer necessary assistance to her family.

Including the above patient, 177 COVID-19 patients have passed away in public hospitals so far.

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## **Import of poultry meat and products from areas in Poland, France and Korea suspended**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (February 1) that in view of notifications from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of Korea about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N8 avian influenza in Wejherowski District of Pomorskie Region in Poland, Lot-Et-Garonne Department in France and Hampyeong-gun of Jeollanam-do Province, Pohang-si of Gyeongsangbuk-do Province and Paju-si of Gyeonggi-do Province in Korea, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the above-mentioned areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 13,500 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 39.08 million poultry eggs from Poland, about 11,940 tonnes of chilled

and frozen poultry meat and about 1.07 million poultry eggs from France and about 1,190 tonnes of chilled and frozen poultry meat and about 11.15 million poultry eggs from Korea last year.

"The CFS has contacted the Polish, French and Korean authorities over the issues and will closely monitor information issued by the OIE and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

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## **Survey on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises' Credit Conditions for Fourth Quarter 2020**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) published today (February 1) the results of Survey on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)' Credit Conditions for the fourth quarter of 2020.

Regarding SMEs' perception of banks' credit approval stance relative to six months ago, excluding respondents who answered "no idea/don't know", 65 per cent perceived "similar" or "easier" credit approval stance in the fourth quarter of 2020, compared with 59 per cent in the previous quarter. 35 per cent perceived "more difficult" credit approval stance, compared with 41 per cent in the previous quarter (Chart 1 in the Annex). The perception of more difficult credit approval stance may not necessarily reflect actual difficulties faced by SMEs in obtaining bank credit as the perception could be affected by a number of factors, such as media/news reports, business conditions and opinions of relatives and friends.

Of those respondents with existing credit lines, 95 per cent reported that banks' stance on existing credit lines was "easier" or "unchanged" in the fourth quarter of 2020, up from 82 per cent in the previous quarter (Chart 2 in the Annex). 5 per cent of the respondents reported "tightened" banks' stance on existing credit lines in the fourth quarter of 2020, down from 18 per cent in the previous quarter. In this survey, tightened stance on existing credit lines denotes a range of possible measures or arrangements, such as reducing unused and used credit lines, raising the interest rate, imposing additional collateral requirements, or shortening loan tenor. Therefore, respondents' indication of banks' stance on existing credit lines may not directly reflect banks' supply of credit to SMEs.

The survey also gauged the results of new credit applications from SMEs.

4 per cent of the respondents reported that they had applied for new bank credit during the fourth quarter of 2020. Among the respondents who had already known their application outcomes, 93 per cent reported fully or partially successful applications, compared with 95 per cent in the previous quarter (Chart 3 in the Annex). 7 per cent reported unsuccessful applications, compared with 5 per cent in the previous quarter.

Owing to small sample sizes of SMEs with existing credit lines (13 per cent of surveyed SMEs) and with new credit applications (4 per cent of surveyed SMEs) during the quarter, the results could be prone to large fluctuations, and hence should be interpreted with care.

#### About Survey on SMEs' Credit Conditions

In light of the importance of SMEs to the Hong Kong economy and concerns about potential funding difficulties facing SMEs over the past few years, the HKMA has appointed the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) to carry out this survey, starting from the third quarter of 2016. This survey is conducted on a quarterly basis, covering about 2 500 SMEs from different economic sectors each time. The results of this survey can help monitor the development of SMEs' access to bank credit from a demand-side perspective.

The results of this survey should be interpreted with caution. Similar to other opinion surveys, views collected in this survey may be affected by changes in sentiment due to idiosyncratic events that occurred over the survey period, which can make the results prone to fluctuations. Readers are advised to interpret the results together with other economic and financial information. In addition, views collected are limited to the expected direction of inter-quarter changes (e.g. "tighter", "similar" or "easier") without providing information about the magnitude of these changes.

Detailed tables and technical information of this survey are published on the website of the HKPC ([smecc.hkpc.org](http://smecc.hkpc.org)).

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## **LegCo to consider Inland Revenue (Amendment) (Tax Concessions for Carried Interest) Bill 2021**

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) will hold a meeting on Wednesday (February 3) at 11am in the Chamber of the LegCo Complex. During the meeting, the Inland Revenue (Amendment) (Tax Concessions for Carried Interest) Bill 2021 will be introduced into the Council for the First Reading and the Second

Reading. The Second Reading debate on the Bill will be adjourned.

Meanwhile, Members will also ask the Government 21 questions on various policy areas, six of which require oral replies.

The agenda of the above meeting can be obtained via the LegCo Website ([www.legco.gov.hk](http://www.legco.gov.hk)). Members of the public can watch or listen to the meeting via the Webcast system on the LegCo Website. To observe the proceedings of the meeting at the LegCo Complex, members of the public may call 3919 3399 during office hours to reserve seats.

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## Government completes enforcement actions on compulsory testing notices at buildings in Tsuen Wan and Tin Shui Wai

The Tsuen Wan District Office and the Yuen Long District Office, together with relevant police districts and the Auxiliary Medical Service (AMS), conducted enforcement actions on compulsory testing notices today (February 1) at two buildings in Tsuen Wan and Tin Shui Wai, which were included in compulsory testing notices earlier, respectively. The operations started at around 7am and ended at around 11am.

Starting from around 7am today, residents of Block R, Luk Yeung Sun Chuen, 22-66 Wai Tsuen Road, Tsuen Wan, and that of Block 9, Lynwood Court, Kingswood Villas, 3 Tin Kwai Road, Tin Shui Wai, were requested to provide an SMS notification received through mobile phone or related certification containing the results of COVID-19 tests arranged by the Government, to show that they had taken such tests as required pursuant to the compulsory testing notices within the specified period issued by the Government earlier on. The Government arranged staff to verify the testing certifications of the residents at the entrances/exits of the buildings, and conducted random checks in the buildings to verify whether residents have undergone testing in compliance with the requirement.

During the operation conducted at Block R, Luk Yeung Sun Chuen, test records of over 240 residents were checked. As for the operation conducted at Block 9, Lynwood Court, test records of over 400 residents were checked. All of the residents in the two operations have complied with the compulsory testing notices and underwent testing within the specified period.

The Government reiterates that the aim of issuing the compulsory testing notices is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community as soon as

possible to protect the overall public health and safety. Persons subject to testing under a compulsory testing notice 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.

The Government wishes to thank all residents who had complied with the compulsory testing notices for their co-operation to fight against the virus together. The Government will continue to enforce the law strictly. All persons subject to compulsory testing should comply with the compulsory testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices may be liable to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Non-compliance with the order is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The Tsuen Wan District Office and the Yuen Long District Office are grateful for the support and co-operation by the Police and the AMS to enable the enforcement actions to be carried out smoothly. The Government understands that the enforcement process may cause some inconvenience to the residents, but hopes the residents can understand.