

## **DH's Tai Po Wong Siu Ching Dental Clinic to close for disinfection**

The Department of Health (DH) announced today (January 19) that its Tai Po Wong Siu Ching Dental Clinic (TPWSCDC) learnt that a patient who tested positive for COVID-19 had earlier visited the premises for treatment. Based on public health considerations, TPWSCDC will be closed for thorough cleaning and disinfection tomorrow (January 20). Affected clients will be contacted to reschedule their service appointments.

The client visited the clinic on January 15 and subsequently tested positive for COVID-19 infection yesterday (January 18). The client had a mask on while waiting for treatment at the dental clinic and the staff attending were wearing masks with suitable protective equipment. So far, no staff members have developed symptoms nor are confirmed cases.

The DH's Centre for Health Protection has initiated an epidemiological investigation on the case and relevant contact tracing is ongoing. In view of the epidemic situation, dental clinics have stepped up infection control measures, including temperature screening for all visitors before clinic entry and conducting health declaration. Dental services have been strictly implementing various disease prevention measures during the epidemic, which include providing employees with masks and other protective equipment, and stepping up the cleaning and sanitising measures of the clinics. All dental services staff members are wearing masks at work and practising hand hygiene at all times. The DH is highly concerned about the COVID-19 situation and has reminded all staff again to maintain personal hygiene and be vigilant at all times.

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## **Two persons sentenced for breaching compulsory quarantine order**

Two men were sentenced by magistrates' courts today (January 19) for violating the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) (the Regulation).

The first case involved a man aged 35, who was earlier issued a compulsory quarantine order stating that he must conduct quarantine at home for 14 days. Before the expiry of the quarantine order, he left the place of quarantine on June 26, 2020, without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer. He was charged with contravening sections 8(1) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was fined \$8,000 by the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today.

The second case involved a man aged 37. Before the expiry of the quarantine order, he had taken off his wristband and left the place of quarantine on August 23, 2020, without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorised officer. He was charged with contravening sections 8(1), 8(4) and 8(5) of the Regulation and was sentenced by the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for 15 days.

Pursuant to the Regulation, starting from December 25, 2020, all persons arriving at Hong Kong (either via the airport or land boundary control points) who have stayed in places outside China on the day of arrival at Hong Kong or during the 21 days before that day have to undergo compulsory quarantine for 21 days in designated quarantine hotels. Moreover, pursuant to the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C), starting from February 8, 2020, all persons who have stayed in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan in the 14 days preceding arrival in Hong Kong, regardless of their nationality or travel documents, will also be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Breaching a quarantine order is a criminal offence and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said the sentences send a clear message to the community that breaching a compulsory quarantine order is a criminal offence that the Government will not tolerate, and solemnly reminded the public to comply with the Regulation. As of today, a total of 103 persons have been convicted by the courts for breaching compulsory quarantine orders and have received sentences including immediate imprisonment for up to 14 weeks or a fine of up to \$15,000. The spokesman reiterated that resolute actions will be taken against anyone who has breached the relevant regulations.

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## **HKMA encourages giving and receiving lai-see through electronic channels**

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

With the Chinese New Year (CNY) just around the corner and in view of the ongoing pandemic, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) encourages the public to use electronic channels for giving lai-see. The public may use the HKMA's Faster Payment System available via online or mobile banking, or other e-wallet services, instead of giving red packets of cash. Electronic payment is convenient and easy-to-use, and has been widely accepted in Hong Kong. During the CNY, major banks and electronic payment operators will introduce various programmes to promote electronic payment as a convenient and fun way of giving and receiving lai-see. This will also eliminate the hassle of exchanging new notes at bank branches, help safeguard public health and

contribute to environmental protection.

Both the HKMA and the three note-issuing banks have carefully considered whether the notes exchange service should still continue amid the pandemic. Since cash deposit and withdrawal are services that banks are obliged to provide for their customers, even if the new notes exchange service were suspended this year, some people may still go to the note-issuing banks to withdraw money or directly request to exchange notes for lai-see uses. To meet the needs of these people and those without access to electronic payment channels (especially senior citizens), and at the same time safeguarding public health, banks will implement proactive measures to protect their customers and staff. Our current stock of new notes is twice the amount of new notes issued in the previous CNY, while the stock of good-as-new notes is three times as big. Furthermore, the duration of the notes exchange service will be extended from two weeks as in previous years to three weeks, i.e. from January 26 to February 11, the latter being the day before the CNY. As such, there is no need to rush to bank branches for new notes in the first few days.

Crowd control and risk management measures of the banks include:

- Ensuring the supply of new notes every day throughout the notes exchange service period, together with abundant good-as-new notes. Good-as-new notes are, as the description suggests, generally in good condition and suitable for lai-see uses;
- Allocating more counters to expedite the processing of notes exchange requests;
- Stepping up social distancing and other infection prevention measures and diverting / managing queues, such as distributing tickets when needed; and
- Individual major banks providing online booking for notes exchange

Those who want to use cash for their lai-see may wish to first check for any remaining stock of new notes or good-as-new notes at home before going to a bank.

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## **Import of poultry meat and products from areas in India, Vietnam, Russia, Poland and Korea suspended**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 19) that in view of notifications from

the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the General Veterinary Inspectorate of Poland and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs of Korea about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Jhabua District of Madhya Pradesh State and Parbhani District of Maharashtra State of India and in Soc Trang Province, Bac Lieu Province, Tien Giang Province and Long An Province of Vietnam; an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza in Inowrocławski District of Kujawsko-Pomorskie Region of Poland; and outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N8 avian influenza in Krasnodarskiy Krai of Russia and Hadong-gun of Gyeongsangnam-do Province, Gimje-si of Jeollabuk-do Province and Boseong-gun of Jeollanam-do Province of 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 Hong Kong has currently established protocols with India and Vietnam for the import of poultry eggs but not for poultry meat, while a protocol has been established with Russia for the import of poultry meat but not for poultry eggs. According to the Census and Statistics Department, in the first nine months of last year, Hong Kong imported about 3.25 million poultry eggs from Vietnam, but no eggs from India; about 142 tonnes of frozen poultry meat from Russia; about 9,900 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 21.32 million poultry eggs from Poland; and about 740 tonnes of chilled and frozen poultry meat and about 8.9 million poultry eggs from Korea.

"The CFS has contacted the Indian, Vietnamese, Russian, Polish 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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## Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (January 19), 42 COVID-19 confirmed patients were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 8 828 patients with confirmed or probable infection have been discharged.

At present, there are 678 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 226 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 639 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in 24 public hospitals and a community treatment facility, among which 39 patients are in critical condition, 28 are in serious condition and the remaining 572 patients are in stable condition.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

Details of the above-mentioned patients are as follows:

Patient condition	Case numbers
Discharged	8094, 8450, 8558, 8735, 8780, 8816, 8868, 8979, 8986, 8996, 8997, 9016, 9021, 9026, 9039, 9047, 9058, 9061, 9069, 9070, 9077, 9082, 9108, 9130, 9167, 9181, 9189, 9190, 9197, 9199, 9201, 9202, 9237, 9261, 9272, 9310, 9374, 9388, 9428, 9509, 9531, 9649
Critical	1989, 3496, 5409, 5511, 5735, 5754, 6125, 6232, 6444, 6547, 6607, 6754, 6794, 6913, 7021, 7123, 7259, 7323, 7424, 8018, 8078, 8126, 8195, 8221, 8323, 8384, 8449, 8452, 8818, 8900, 8937, 9030, 9049, 9060, 9062, 9166, 9267, 9311, 9438
Serious	5739, 5990, 6386, 6543, 6824, 6850, 7076, 7208, 7305, 7468, 7653, 7964, 8443, 8819, 8820, 8832, 8931, 9040, 9045, 9055, 9066, 9115, 9133, 9135, 9185, 9240, 9247, 9284