

# Special work arrangements for government employees to be extended

As the local epidemic situation remains severe, it is necessary for the Government to continue to take measures to significantly reduce the flow of people and social contact in order to stop COVID-19 from further spreading in the community. A spokesman for the Government announced today (January 5) that the special work arrangements for government employees will be extended until January 20. Save for those involved in the provision of emergency services and essential public services and in anti-epidemic efforts, all other government employees will be arranged to continue to work from home. The Government will closely monitor the epidemic situation and review the arrangements before January 20.

The spokesman said that government departments would continue to provide emergency services and essential public services. Furthermore, since the outbreak of the fourth wave of the epidemic, government departments have proactively mobilised government employees at different times to join in the anti-epidemic effort in different roles, including the implementation of testing on mandatory, obligatory and voluntary bases; strict enforcement of quarantine arrangements and closed-loop management for persons arriving in Hong Kong for prevention of imported cases; and tracing, isolation and quarantine arrangements for prevention of the spread of the virus in the community. These include front-line departments responsible for implementing various measures such as the Home Affairs Department and the disciplined services departments, as well as departments providing technical support, supplies and other supportive roles such as the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Government Logistics Department. The Government will, depending on the development of the epidemic situation and actual needs, continue to flexibly deploy manpower to support the anti-epidemic effort.

Individual departments will announce the latest arrangements of their services separately. The Government appeals to members of the public for their understanding on the inconvenience caused by the reduction in public services in view of the epidemic. Where necessary, members of the public are encouraged to use alternative means, such as the post, drop-in boxes or online channels, to receive the services they need. Meanwhile, members of the public should wear surgical masks at all times when they are entering or are present in any government buildings or offices, and comply with the infection control measures implemented by relevant departments including temperature checks, using the "LeaveHomeSafe" mobile app and crowd control arrangements.

The spokesman appealed to employers to allow their staff members to work from home as far as possible according to their operational needs so as to reduce the flow of people and social contact in the community.

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## **Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rates in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.

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## **Princess Margaret Hospital announces a cluster of COVID-19 positive cases**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesman for the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) made an announcement today (January 4) regarding a cluster of COVID-19 positive cases:

A 66-year-old female patient with multiple myeloma was admitted to the Medical Day Ward in PMH for bisphosphonate infusion at around 11.30am on December 28, 2020. The patient presented with fever but had no upper respiratory tract infection symptoms. A designated cohorting area was arranged for her in the Medical Day Ward. The patient was all along masked except meal time and was discharged at around 4.30 pm after the infusion therapy of the day was done.

On January 1, the patient was classified as a close contact as her family member was confirmed positive to COVID-19 and the patient presented with shortness of breath. She was admitted to PMH for isolation and treatment. The hospital subsequently arranged COVID-19 test for her and the test result was preliminarily positive. The patient's condition deteriorated subsequently and required high-flow oxygen to maintain breathing. She is currently treated in the Intensive Care Unit with critical condition.

The hospital's infection control team conducted contact tracing for the Medical Day Ward. The team found that 55 patients and 27 staff members had stayed in the Medical Day Ward in the same period on December 28, 2020. The

hospital immediately arranged COVID-19 tests for them. Two patients (one male and one female, aged 35 and 60) and two staff members (one doctor and one nurse) were tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19. All of them are under isolation for treatment in the hospital. Besides, 23 patients, 8 staff members and two people who accompanied the patient for consultation are also classified as close contacts and are required quarantine for 14 days.

Having conducted further contact tracing for the two staff, seven more staff members are classified as close contacts and are required quarantine for 14 days. The contact tracing is still underway.

A team of experts including Professor Yuen Kwok-yung, Chair Professor of the Department of Microbiology, University of Hong Kong and Dr Raymond Lai, Hospital Authority Chief Infection Control Officer had paid a visit to the Medical Day Ward in PMH this afternoon. After Professor Yuen reviewed patients and staff cases, the workflow of the ward and hospital's infection control measures, he suggested that all those who are going to attend the Day Ward should take the COVID-19 test 72 hours before the consultation. He also suggested that if the patient presents with fever, he / she should be admitted to the surveillance ward or isolation ward. Besides, Professor Yuen also suggested that the hospital should shorten the meal time of patients as far as possible, such as providing light meals instead, in order to shorten the unmask duration of patients.

The hospital immediately enhanced the infection control of respective caring procedures in view of the experts' advice. The hospital will carefully examine the recommendations of the experts and to introduce other improvement measures. The operation of the Medical Day Ward has been suspended for thorough cleansing and sanitisation with immediate effect. PMH will continue to closely monitor the health of our staff and patients and communicate with the Centre for Health Protection about the latest situation.

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## **Tuen Mun Hospital announces two COVID-19 patients passed away**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Tuen Mun Hospital (TMH) today (January 4) announced that two patients confirmed with COVID-19 passed away.

An 81-year-old male patient with chronic disease (case number: 6817) consulted a general practitioner for fever and cough, and subsequently tested positive for COVID-19. He was then admitted to an isolation ward of TMH on December 5 last year. His condition continued to deteriorate and he eventually succumbed at 7.47pm tonight.

On the other hand, a 79-year-old male patient (case number: 6843) with chronic disease was admitted to the Accident and Emergency Department of Pok Oi Hospital on December 4, 2020 due to shortness of breath. He was later tested positive for COVID-19 and transferred to an isolation ward of TMH for further treatment on the same day. His condition continued to deteriorate and he eventually succumbed at 9.15pm tonight.

The hospital is saddened about the passing away of the patients and would offer necessary assistance to their families.

Including the above patients, 149 COVID-19 confirmed patients have passed away in public hospitals so far.

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## **HKSAR Government welcomes promulgation of Culture and Tourism Development Plan for Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area by Ministry of Culture and Tourism**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government welcomes the joint promulgation of the Culture and Tourism Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (the Plan) by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT), the Office of the Leading Group for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and the People's Government of Guangdong Province. The Plan sets out the directions for the overall cultural and tourism development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area) and guides the development of the Greater Bay Area into an exchange hub for culture of the East and the West and a world-class tourism destination. It also helps strengthen the positions of Hong Kong as an international cultural metropolis and an international tourism hub.

A Government spokesman today (January 4) said, "We express gratitude to the MoCT for according importance to the views raised by the HKSAR Government in the course of formulating the Plan. Based on the guiding directions of the Plan, the HKSAR Government will proactively integrate into the country's overall development. It will also work hand in hand with the MoCT, the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province and the culture and tourism authorities of the Greater Bay Area cities, to jointly implement the major work in the Plan to develop a world-class bay area for culture and leisure."

On culture, the spokesman said that the joint cultural development, exchange and building of the Greater Bay Area put forward in the “Jointly Developing a Cultured Bay Area” chapter in the Plan will further enhance the development, exchange and communication of arts and culture performances and audience amongst the cities in the Greater Bay Area. This will also create opportunities for arts and culture organisations in the Greater Bay Area to explore the international market together. The broader performing arts market in the Greater Bay Area will also enhance the quality of productions of the arts and culture sector in Hong Kong. In the long run, this will help achieve the goal of building the Greater Bay Area into a quality living circle for living, working and travelling, as mentioned in the Plan.

At the same time, the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) in Hong Kong provides several world-class performance and arts exhibition venues. Xiqu Centre, the first performing arts venue in WKCD, was commissioned in 2019. M+ Museum and the Hong Kong Palace Museum will also be commissioned in the coming years. These world-class culture facilities will raise the profile of Hong Kong as an international culture hub and provide strong support for the development of the Greater Bay Area in the cultural dimension. Separately, the HKSAR Government will continue to encourage the youth in Hong Kong to participate in cultural exchange in the Greater Bay Area to deepen their understanding about the rich historical and cultural background of the Greater Bay Area. This will prepare them to take part in the cultural development in the Greater Bay Area and the country in the future.

On tourism, the HKSAR Government fully supports the various measures taking forward the tourism development of the Greater Bay Area in the “Building a Bay Area for Leisure” chapter of the Plan, including developing more distinctive Greater Bay Area tourism products and itineraries, jointly promoting Greater Bay Area multi-destination tourism, driving the tourism development of cruise and yacht, strengthening the co-operation of tourism market regulation of the Greater Bay Area as well as nurturing of tourism talents. Implementation of these measures will attract more overseas tourists to the Greater Bay Area and promote the high-quality development of the tourism industry of the area as well as construct a world-class bay area for travelling.

The spokesman pointed out that both the Plan and the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area promulgated in February 2019 expressly support Hong Kong in developing into an international tourism hub and a core demonstration zone for multi-destination tourism. When the pandemic is over, the HKSAR Government will continue to leverage Hong Kong’s strengths as the Asia’s world city and best utilise Hong Kong’s well-established marine, land and air connections as well as its rich tourism resources, to attract overseas tourists to embark on Greater Bay Area multi-destination journeys via Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board will jointly promote the Greater Bay Area tourism brand and feature Hong Kong as a star destination for multi-destination tourism with Guangdong Province and Macao in due course. They will jointly cultivate the international visitor source market and develop the Greater Bay Area as a world-class tourism destination.

The full text of the Plan is available at the MoCT's website ([www.mct.gov.cn](http://www.mct.gov.cn)) (Chinese only).