

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (June 16), two COVID-19 confirmed patients (case numbers: 1094 and 1103) were discharged from hospital in the past 24 hours. So far, a total of 1,069 patients with confirmed or probable infections have been discharged.

At present, there are 624 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1,179 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 40 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in eight hospitals, among which three patients are in critical condition (case numbers: 595, 1084 and 1100), one patient is in serious condition (case number: 1092) and the remaining 36 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.

Exchange Fund Bills tender results

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

Exchange Fund Bills tender results:

Tender date	: June 16, 2020
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q2025
Issue date	: June 17, 2020
Maturity date	: September 16, 2020
Amount applied	: HK\$167,285 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$44,320 MN
Average yield accepted	: 0.26 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 0.27 PCT
Pro rata ratio	: About 64 PCT
Average tender yield	: 0.38 PCT

Tender date : June 16, 2020
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H2054
Issue date : June 17, 2020
Maturity date : December 16, 2020
Amount applied : HK\$42,670 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$10,000 MN
Average yield accepted : 0.26 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 0.26 PCT
Pro rata ratio : About 100 PCT
Average tender yield : 0.40 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held in the week beginning June 22:

Tender date : June 23, 2020
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q2026
Issue date : June 24, 2020
Maturity date : September 23, 2020
Tenor : 91 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$44,217 MN

Tender date : June 23, 2020
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H2055
Issue date : June 24, 2020
Maturity date : December 23, 2020
Tenor : 182 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$9,000 MN

[Unemployment and underemployment statistics for March – May 2020](#)

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for March – May 2020) released today (June 16) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from 5.2% in February – April 2020 to 5.9% in March – May 2020. The underemployment rate also increased from 3.1% in February – April 2020 to

3.5% in March – May 2020.

Comparing March – May 2020 with February – April 2020, the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) increased across almost all the major economic sectors, with more distinct increases observed in the construction sector; retail, accommodation and food services sector; transportation sector; information and communications sector; education sector; and arts, entertainment and recreation sector. As to the underemployment rate, increases were mainly seen in the retail sector; transportation sector; and warehousing and support activities for transportation sector.

Total employment decreased by around 37 900 from 3 657 400 in February – April 2020 to 3 619 500 in March – May 2020. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 9 900 from 3 859 800 to 3 849 900.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by around 27 900 from 202 500 in February – April 2020 to 230 400 in March – May 2020. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also increased by around 16 500 from 118 600 to 135 100.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong said, "The labour market showed further deterioration in March – May 2020 as a wide range of economic activities stayed in the doldrums. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased by 0.7 percentage point from the preceding three-month period to 5.9%, surpassing the peak of 5.5% in the aftermath of the global financial crisis to reach the highest in more than 15 years. The underemployment rate rose visibly by 0.4 percentage point to 3.5%, the highest in close to 17 years. The year-on-year declines in total employment and labour force widened further to 6.5% and 3.3% respectively, both the largest on record."

"The unemployment rate of the consumption- and tourism-related sectors (viz. retail, accommodation and food services sectors) combined increased to 10.6% in March – May 2020, the highest since August – October 2003 after the onslaught of SARS, and the underemployment rate rose visibly to 6.3%, the highest on record. Among these sectors, the unemployment rate for food and beverage service activities rose to 14.8% while the underemployment rate stayed elevated at 8.2%. Meanwhile, the situation in the construction sector worsened, with the unemployment rate rising to 10.8% and the underemployment rate to 8.2%. The labour market conditions in many other sectors also weakened, particularly in transportation, information and communications, education, and arts, entertainment and recreation."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "While the local epidemic situation has abated, it will take time for local economic activities to return to normal. The external environment also remains difficult as the pandemic continues to weigh on the global economy. Thus the labour market will still face pressure in the near term, yet the pace of deterioration may decelerate. To preserve the vitality of the economy, the Government has rolled out relief measures of

unprecedented scale, including a series of measures on job retention and job creation. These measures should help keep workers in employment. The Government will monitor the situation closely."

To assist secondary school leavers of this year to enter the labour market, he noted that the Labour Department (LD) launched a special programme – "Career Let's Go" from June to August. Youth Employment Start will organise various training courses, including those that enhance the job-hunting and interviewing skills of graduates, as well as provide school leavers with career assessment and career consultation services. Moreover, the LD will canvass job vacancies suitable for secondary school leavers and organise a number of large-scale and district-based job fairs where job-seekers can have job interviews with the recruiting employers on the spot. A dedicated webpage (www.jobs.gov.hk/careerletsgo) has been set up to provide information on the activities of the special programme as well as other employment market information, including listing out job vacancies suitable for persons with secondary school education.

Meanwhile, the LD continues to receive and release information on vacancies from various industries for job-seekers with different educational background and working experience. Job-seekers may make use of the LD's online platforms such as the Interactive Employment Service website for obtaining employment information.

Further information

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were compiled from the findings of the continuous General Household Survey.

The survey for March – May 2020 covered a sample of some 26 000 households or 75 000 persons, selected in accordance with a scientifically designed sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong Kong.

Data on labour force characteristics were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the sampled households.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization.

Statistical tables on the latest labour force statistics can be downloaded free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp200.jsp?productCode=D5250021). More detailed analysis of the labour force characteristics is given in the "Quarterly Report on General Household Survey" which is published four times a year. The latest issue of the publication contains statistics for the quarter January – March 2020 while the next issue covering the quarter April – June 2020 will be available by end August 2020. Users can also download this publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp200.jsp?productCode=B1050001).

For enquiries about labour force statistics, please contact the Household Statistics Analysis Section of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).

CHP announces no new local confirmed cases of COVID-19 today

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (June 16), no new local confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) had been recorded, and that the number of cases in Hong Kong remained at 1 113 so far (comprising 1 112 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Meanwhile, the CHP has been actively conducting an epidemiological investigation as well as carrying out preventive and control measures in regard to the cluster in Luk Chuen House, Lek Yuen Estate, Sha Tin. The CHP has given out more specimen bottles to residents of Luk Chuen House through the Housing Department for collecting deep throat saliva samples for the second round of COVID-19 testing. As of 4pm today, the CHP had collected and tested 847 deep throat saliva samples of the second round for Luk Chuen House and all of them have tested negative for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

The CHP strongly appeals to the residents to collect their deep throat saliva samples according to instructions and submit them to the CHP in the specified period (today and tomorrow) for early testing. The CHP will arrange compulsory testing for those who do not return their samples.

The CHP again urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives to minimise the risk of infection. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contacting infected persons who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially

before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
 - Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
 - Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
 - Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
 - After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
 - Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
 - Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
 - When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.
-

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, June 16, 2020 is 107.7 (down 0.4 against yesterday's index).