

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (May 19), in the past 24 hours no COVID-19 confirmed patient was discharged from hospital. So far, a total of 1 025 confirmed and suspected patients have been discharged.

At present, there are 659 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 219 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 27 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in nine hospitals, among which one patient is in critical condition (case number: 595), one patient is in serious condition (case number: 713), and the remaining 25 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.

Government receives tentative results of 2020 Pay Trend Survey

A spokesman for the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) said that the bureau received the tentative results of the 2020 Pay Trend Survey from the secretariat of the Pay Trend Survey Committee (PTSC) today (May 19).

The tentative results, presented in the form of gross pay trend indicators (PTIs), show the rates of pay adjustment in the private sector in three salary bands for the period from April 2, 2019, to April 1, 2020. The PTSC will meet next week to decide whether to validate the gross PTIs.

"The Chief Executive-in-Council will fully consider all relevant factors under the established annual civil service pay adjustment mechanism in determining the annual civil service pay adjustment. These factors include the net PTIs (see attachment) calculated from the gross PTIs, the state of Hong Kong's economy, the Government's fiscal position, changes in the cost of living, the pay claims of the staff side and civil service morale. The effect of the coronavirus disease 2019 epidemic in recent months will also be reflected in the relevant factors," the CSB spokesman said.

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

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) has announced that as of 4pm today (May 19), 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 1 056 so far (comprising 1 055 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The CHP will further extend the Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance Programme tomorrow (May 20) to conduct free COVID-19 testing for selected staff members working at residential care homes for the elderly, residential care homes for persons with disabilities and nursing homes. Strengthening testing for asymptomatic staff members at these institutions will help identify silent carriers early and minimise the risk of cluster infection there to safeguard the health of staff members and residents.

Under the programme, the DH, with the assistance of the Social Welfare Department, will provide specimen containers to the institutions starting tomorrow and invite each institution to arrange for three staff members to collect deep throat saliva samples for testing. Priority would be given to those who come in close contact with residents on a routine basis, such as nurses, health workers and care workers.

Staff members taking part in the programme should be asymptomatic and participation should be voluntary. They should collect samples in accordance with the instructions by themselves during the specified collection period and return the specimen containers on the same day to the collection points of the DH or the Hospital Authority, or via the door-to-door specimen collection service (charges apply). The collection points of the samples are 13 designated chest clinics or dermatological clinics under the DH from 9am to 1pm on Monday to Friday and also some general out-patient clinics under the Hospital Authority from 8.30am to 9.30am on Monday to Friday (except public holidays). For details on courier services, please refer to the websites of GOGO VAN (www.gogovan.com.hk/covid-19-testing-en) and Pickupp (hk.pickupp.io/en/blog/COVID-19-sample).

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."

The CHP has set up hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 4pm today, a total of 116 901 calls had been received.

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.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, 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.

[Pay Trend Survey Committee meeting on May 19, 2020](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Pay Trend Survey Committee:

The 2020 Pay Trend Survey (PTS) Report, compiled by the Pay Survey and Research Unit of the Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service, was released today (May 19) to Members of the Pay Trend Survey Committee (PTSC).

The survey has indicated the following average pay adjustments in the surveyed companies over the 12-month period from April 2, 2019, to April 1, 2020.

Tentative findings of the 2020 PTS (subject to verification)

	Basic Pay Indicator	+	Additional Pay Indicator	=	Gross Pay Trend Indicator
Lower Salary Band (below \$24,070 per month)	3.53%	+	-1.22%	=	2.31%
Middle Salary Band (\$24,070 – \$73,775 per month)	4.19%	+	-1.18%	=	3.01%
Upper Salary Band (\$73,776 – \$147,235 per month)	3.67%	+	-0.95%	=	2.72%

Members of the PTSC are at present studying the survey report in detail. Subject to their analysis and deliberation, the PTSC will verify and consider whether to validate the findings of the survey at its meeting on May 27. After that, the PTS results will be submitted to the Government.

In accordance with the established practice, the Chief Executive-in-Council will take into account the Pay Trend Indicators derived from the PTS and other pertinent considerations (such as the state of Hong Kong's economy, the Government's fiscal position, changes in the cost of living, the pay claims of the staff side and civil service morale) before making a decision on the 2020-21 civil service pay adjustment.

The survey results reflect the pay trend in 107 companies covering 146 434 employees over the 12-month period from April 2, 2019, to April 1, 2020. Among these companies, there are 80 larger companies (employing 100 or more staff) and 27 smaller companies (employing 50 to 99 staff). These companies are regarded as typical employers in their respective fields and are generally known as steady and good employers with rational and systematic salary administration.

The survey is conducted in accordance with the improved methodology as approved by the Chief Executive-in-Council in March 2007. The survey takes into account adjustments to basic salary and additional payments awarded to employees of the surveyed companies attributable to factors in relation to cost of living, general prosperity and company performance, general changes in market rates, merit and inscale increment.

The PTSC is chaired by Mr Lee Luen-fai, who is a member of the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service. Mr Lee wishes to express the PTSC's sincere appreciation for the co-operation and assistance rendered by the companies that participated in the 2020 PTS.

[Unemployment and underemployment statistics for February – April 2020](#)

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for February – April 2020) released today (May 19) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from 4.2% in January – March 2020 to 5.2% in February – April 2020. The underemployment rate also increased from 2.1% in January – March 2020 to 3.1% in February – April 2020.

Comparing February – April 2020 with January – March 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; information and communications sector; professional and business services (excluding cleaning and similar activities) sector; education sector; and arts, entertainment and recreation sector. As to the underemployment rate, increases were mainly seen in the decoration, repair and maintenance for buildings sector; retail, accommodation and food services sector; transportation sector; and education sector.

Total employment decreased by around 62 600 from 3 720 000 in January – March 2020 to 3 657 400 in February – April 2020. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 22 400 from 3 882 200 to 3 859 800.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by around 40 300 in February – April 2020 compared to January – March 2020, from 162 200 to 202 500. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also increased by around 35 800 from 82 800 to 118 600.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong said, "The labour market showed further sharp deterioration as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to weigh on a wide range of economic activities. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate soared by 1.0 percentage point to 5.2% in February – April 2020, the highest in over a decade. The underemployment rate likewise surged by 1.0 percentage point to 3.1%, the highest in over 15 years. The year-on-year declines in total employment and labour force widened further to 5.4% and 3.0% respectively, both the largest on record.

"The unemployment rate of the consumption- and tourism-related sectors (viz. retail, accommodation and food services sectors) combined soared to 9.0%, the highest in more than 15 years, and the underemployment rate to 5.9%, the highest on record. In particular, the unemployment and underemployment rates in food and beverage service activities surged to 12.0% and 8.4% respectively. The situation in the construction sector was equally austere, with the unemployment rate and underemployment rate rising to 10.0% and 8.0% respectively. Labour market conditions in most other sectors also deteriorated, particularly in education, information and communications, professional and business services (excluding cleaning and similar activities), and arts, entertainment and recreation."

Looking ahead, Dr Law said, "The labour market will continue to face immense pressure in the near term. 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 closely monitor the situation."

In view of the worsening youth employment situation, he noted that the Labour Department (LD) has increased the subsidy payable to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) participating in the new phase of Career Kick-start, so as to provide more opportunities for young people having special employment difficulties to be engaged by NGOs to undergo 12-month on-the-job training. The workplace attachment allowance payable to trainees under the Youth Employment and Training Programme has also been raised to assist young people in entering the labour market.

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 February – April 2020 covered a sample of some 27 000 households or 76 000 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 October – December 2019 while the next issue covering the quarter January – March 2020 will be available by end May 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).