

Government announces mechanism for The University of Hong Kong – Shenzhen Hospital and Hong Kong enterprises providing medical or dental services in the Mainland to apply for exemption from compulsory quarantine arrangement

The Government announced today (May 18) the mechanism for The University of Hong Kong – Shenzhen Hospital (HKUSZH) and Hong Kong enterprises providing medical or dental services in the Mainland to apply for exemption from the compulsory quarantine arrangement under our local regime.

The Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong (Amendment) (No.2) Regulation 2020 commenced on April 29, 2020, amending the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) (amended Regulation). The expiry date of the amended Regulation is June 7, 2020. In accordance with section 4(1)(b) in the amended Regulation, the Chief Secretary for Administration may designate any person or category of persons for exemption from the compulsory quarantine arrangement if he is satisfied that the person's or category of persons' travelling is necessary for purposes relating to the provision of professional services in the interest of Hong Kong's economic development.

In accordance with the above-mentioned provision, the Chief Secretary for Administration has exempted the following categories of persons from the compulsory quarantine arrangement:

1. up to 50 persons employed and so authorised by HKUSZH; and
2. (i) either the owner of a Hong Kong enterprise with a valid Hong Kong Service Supplier Certificate in relation to the provision of medical and dental services in the Mainland under the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, and up to one person employed and so authorised by the enterprise; or

(ii) up to two persons employed and so authorised by such an enterprise as described in (i).

Each exempted person must take a COVID-19 nucleic acid test at HKUSZH within seven days before entry to Hong Kong (starting from the date of collection of sample) and present a valid certificate of negative test result to authorised officers at the control points.

An exempted person must only travel to and stay in the areas/cities where the services are provided for the purpose of provision of the intended services as approved, and must take every precautionary measure to ensure personal hygiene and avoid unnecessary social contact. After returning to Hong Kong, the exempted person will be subject to medical surveillance arranged by the Department of Health for a period of 14 days. The person will be required to wear masks and check body temperature daily, and report to the Department of Health on any discomfort.

All exempted persons should note that currently travellers to the Mainland would still be subject to the 14-day compulsory quarantine requirement imposed by the Mainland authorities. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is discussing with authorities in the Mainland on mutual recognition of COVID-19 testing results conducted by recognised medical laboratories, with a view to exempting the quarantine requirement for Hong Kong travellers to the Mainland. Details of the arrangement will be announced when available.

The details of the exemption arrangement and the application forms are available for download from the website of the Food and Health Bureau (FHB): (www.fhb.gov.hk/en/download_forms/index.html).

Applicants should submit the completed application form with all required supporting documents to FHB by email (exempt_med599C@fhb.gov.hk) or by fax (2905 1165). In processing the applications, FHB may consult the relevant bureaux/departments when necessary. FHB will issue authorisation letters to the exempted persons, setting out the conditions for exemption.

For enquiries, please call FHB's hotline at 3509 8953.

Statement by Chairman of The Legislative Council Commission

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

The Chairman of The Legislative Council (LegCo) Commission (The Commission), Mr Andrew Leung, today (May 18) issued the following statement through the LegCo Secretariat:

I note with much regret that chaos erupted at the meeting of the LegCo House Committee held today for the election of its Chairman, during which some Members, for several times, rushed towards the Secretariat staff who were discharging duties and the confrontations resulted in the injury of

security staff. Since the Secretariat staff were obstructed in the discharge of their duties and sustained injuries as a result, the Secretariat has reported the case to the Police in accordance with the mechanism endorsed by The Commission.

I notice that recently there have been serious and unfounded accusations made by some Members against the Secretariat in the performance of its duties, which are grossly unjust and unfair to the Secretariat. The Secretariat has all along been upholding the principle of political neutrality, providing professional administrative support and services to the Council in an impartial manner, and facilitating the efficient and smooth conduct of LegCo meetings.

Political neutrality is the Secretariat's core value and guiding principle. I have no doubt that staff of the Secretariat will continue to serve the LegCo professionally. I also call on Members to demonstrate mutual respect by expressing their views in a lawful and reasonable manner.

Two offenders sentenced for breaching compulsory quarantine order

Two persons were sentenced to immediate imprisonment for up to four weeks by the Kwun Tong Magistrates' Court today (May 18) for violating the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) (the Regulation).

The two cases involve a man aged 68 and a woman aged 48 respectively. They were issued compulsory quarantine orders stating that they must conduct quarantine at home for 14 days. Before the expiry of the quarantine orders, they left the place of quarantine without reasonable excuse nor permission given by an authorized officer and were stopped by staff of the Immigration Department at border control points. They were charged with contravening sections 8(1) and 8(5) of the Regulation and were sentenced today to immediate imprisonment for four weeks and 10 days respectively.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said the sentence sends a clear message to the community that breaching quarantine orders is a criminal offence and that the Government will not tolerate such actions. The spokesman reiterated that compliance with quarantine orders is of paramount importance in Hong Kong's fight against COVID-19.

Pursuant to the Regulation, save for exempted persons, all persons who have stayed in the Mainland, Macau or Taiwan in the 14 days preceding arrival at Hong Kong, regardless of their nationality or travel documents, will be

subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Moreover, pursuant to the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E), starting from 19 March, all persons arriving from countries or territories outside China would also be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Breaching quarantine orders is a criminal offence and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months. The Department of Health solemnly reminds persons under quarantine to comply with the statutory requirements and conduct quarantine for 14 days.

Youth Development Commission convenes sixth meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the sixth meeting of the Youth Development Commission (YDC) today (May 18). At the meeting, members were briefed on the job creation measures on supporting youth employment introduced under the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF), and discussed the progress and outlook of the YDC's work.

Members noted that the Government would create about 30 000 time-limited jobs under the AEF in the public and private sectors in the coming two years for people with different skills and academic qualifications. Each job placement would last for up to 12 months. The jobs will include positions suitable for youth, such as those for fresh graduates, including positions requiring professional or general skills (e.g. graduate programmes in building surveying, town planning, estate surveying, land surveying and engineering; IT executives; and researchers), positions for experienced professionals (e.g. legal, accounting, financial services, engineering and architecture), positions for technicians and supporting staff, and positions to promote arts and culture and a green lifestyle (e.g. jobs in museums, green ambassadors and eco-tour guides).

Besides time-limited positions, the Government will create more than 10 000 civil service job openings for replacing retirees and filling new posts to be created in the 2020-21 Estimates. The job openings will cover a wide range of grades and many of them will be very suitable for application by youth. In addition, the Government will hire about 5 000 short-term interns, including inviting public bodies to provide internship placements.

Members generally welcomed the above job creation measures. They suggested that the Government should, when designing the relevant job positions, give due consideration to young people's needs in their career development, with a view to assisting them to enter different industries and continue to develop and progress therein. Furthermore, members suggested strengthening publicity of the relevant positions and on-the-job training,

and recommended that the Government encourage private organisations to hire fresh graduates. To further drive forward youth employment work, the YDC agreed to, subject to maintaining adequate social distancing, arrange the first policy thematic meeting through webcasting within June and adopt youth employment as the theme, with a view to further listening to young people's views on employment prospects and, through making use of the YDC as a platform to foster cross-bureau collaboration, implementing the above-mentioned job creation measures related to youth more effectively.

Members also took note of the progress of the YDC's various youth development programmes. To protect young people's health, minimise social contact and implement anti-infection measures, and in view of the development of the COVID-19 epidemic and work requirements, the YDC has, since January, implemented various special arrangements and enhancement measures for its youth development programmes.

In particular, in view of school suspension and the impact on young people's well-being brought about by the epidemic, the YDC introduced in March enhancement measures to the Funding Scheme for Youth Life Planning Activities (2019-22). The existing 24 funded organisations were invited to organise no fewer than five additional activities within the current school year, including making use of technology to organise life planning activities and organise activities that would enhance young people's well-being and stress management, thus providing life planning support and training to students during the epidemic. The enhancement measures have received a positive response. A total of 23 funded organisations participated in the new enhancement measures and received an additional grant equivalent to 10 per cent of the grant receivable for the 2019/20 school year to organise relevant activities. A total of more than 200 e-learning activities have been organised so far.

Furthermore, the YDC has collaborated with the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) to produce a video series entitled "Together, We Fight the Disease with Youth". Members from different backgrounds were invited to answer young people's questions about fighting the disease and to show support to young people. A total of five episodes have been released through social media platforms and have accumulated close to 200 000 views in total so far. The public may visit the Facebook pages of the YDC and the HAB to watch the relevant videos.

Disbursement of subsidies to construction industry under the second

round of the Anti-epidemic Fund in progress

The Development Bureau (DEVB) announced today (May 18) that about \$1.2 billion in subsidies has been disbursed to about 160 000 construction workers under the second round of the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF). Together with the subsidies dispensed under the first round of the AEF, more than \$1.7 billion in subsidies has been disbursed.

"Among some 210 000 workers who received the \$1,500 subsidy under the first round of the AEF, about 80 per cent of them have received the one-off \$7,500 subsidy automatically under the second round of the AEF. The remaining 20 per cent of workers shall also receive the subsidies within the coming days," a spokesman for the DEVB said.

"Under the second round of the AEF, besides registered construction workers under the Construction Workers Registration Ordinance (Cap. 583), workers registered with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, the Buildings Department, the Water Supplies Department and the Fire Services Department will also directly benefit from the one-off subsidy of \$7,500. Eligible workers can now submit applications via the Construction Industry Council's (CIC) mobile application," the spokesman said.

Moreover, the Government will align the amount of the one-off subsidies offered to construction-related enterprises under the second round of the AEF at the higher level of \$20,000 each, covering eligible contractors, specialist contractors, works contractors and suppliers, as well as eligible minor works contractors, registered contractors of electrical/gas/lift/escalator/fire service installation and suppliers of construction-related machineries and equipment rental. Relevant enterprises can submit applications through the CIC's online platform within May.

The DEVB is also processing the applications from consultant firms offering engineering/architectural and related professional services for training subsidy under the second round of the AEF. The disbursement of subsidies to the approved companies is in progress.

The deadline for application for the various subsidies is August 31. Eligible companies or workers who have not yet submitted their applications may visit the CIC's dedicated website for details (www.cic.hk/eng/main/anti_epidemic_fund_2nd/).

For more details, please call the CIC hotline at 3199 7377 or e-mail PPEFund@cic.hk.