

CEDB responds to media report on Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme

In response to a media report on the implementation of the Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme today (April 16), a spokesman for the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau said the following:

"The policy objective of the Local Mask Production Subsidy Scheme established under the Anti-epidemic Fund by the Government is to provide subsidies to facilitate local mask production with a view to stabilising mask supply as well as building up stock to meet contingency needs. The Government is pleased to note that the Scheme has attracted a considerable number of applications since its launch and many manufacturers have already indicated their interest and are prepared to commence local mask production.

"According to the Scheme, an applicant is required to state in its application the target commencement date of supplying certified masks to the Government, and the date is one of the application criteria. After approval in principle is given, the Government will sign an agreement with the approved applicant. If the applicant cannot supply certified masks to the Government by the target commencement date, it may apply for extension of not more than one month. Any extension beyond one month without exceptional reasons and full justifications would result in revocation of the subsidy. In other words, the exact date of the Government's procurement of certified masks supplied by a subsidised production line depends on when that production line can meet the requirements.

"As of now, the Government has approved in principle eight production lines and will sign agreements with the approved applicants. Prior to the signing of agreements, no subsidy has been disbursed to any applicant and procurement of certified masks has not yet started.

"For local masks produced outside the Scheme, including those produced by an approved applicant before an agreement is signed, or those produced by the same company with a non-subsidised production line, manufacturers can make their own arrangements on testing and certification, sales or other matters. All masks sold in Hong Kong, whether they are produced locally or the production of which is subsidised by the Government, must comply with relevant legislations, such as the Trade Descriptions Ordinance and the Consumer Goods Safety Ordinance.

"The Government is concerned about the difficulties faced by the elderly and the underprivileged in buying masks. So far, the Government has passed 3.5 million masks donated by various sectors to the Government to non-governmental organisations for their distribution to the elderly and underprivileged. The Government will continue to pass on donations in order to share resources with the community and to fight the epidemic together."

CHP investigates additional case of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (April 16), the CHP was investigating an additional confirmed case of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 1 018 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 017 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported case announced today involves a 19-year-old female overseas student, who had a travel history during the incubation period. The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed case are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex.

The CHP urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives. 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, "In view of the proliferation of the disease and 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 will report the cases to the World Health Organization, the National Health Commission, the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, relevant health authorities and the Hospital Authority.

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

92 977 calls were 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 door knobs, 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.

Government announces appointments to Committee on Promotion of Organ Donation

The Government announced the appointment of 10 new members and the re-appointment of 12 serving members to the Committee on Promotion of Organ Donation. All appointments will be effective for a term of two years until

April 14, 2022.

Established in April 2016, the Committee is responsible for formulating strategies and directions for organ donation promotion, co-ordinating activities for promoting and facilitating organ donation, and formulating programmes and activities to encourage and educate the public on organ donation.

In addition, the Committee co-ordinates and integrates relevant work by government departments and organisations to augment public education and publicity, so as to foster and fortify the culture of organ donation.

Under the guidance of the Committee, various promotional activities such as promotional booths, talks, campaigns and ceremonies, together with publicity campaigns through a wide range of channels, have been organised to promote organ donation and encourage registration for the Centralised Organ Donation Register.

The Food and Health Bureau expressed its gratitude for the contributions and efforts of the Committee to promote organ donation in the past two years. The Government will continue to inculcate a culture that is receptive to and appreciative of organ donation. It is hoped that through these efforts, more Hong Kong people will be willing to donate organs after death to save other people's lives.

The latest membership list of the Committee is as follows:

Chairperson:

Dr Chui Tak-yi (Under Secretary for Food and Health)

Members:

Dr Chau Ka-foon

Mr Cheng Chung-pong*

Mr Wilson Cheng Hok-ming*

Ms Ken Cheng Yuk-kam

Dr Chow Kai-ming*

Dr Ho Chung-ping

Dr Kelvin Ho

Mr Brian Ho Sze-ming*

Dr Jeffrey Hui Jik-fai

Ms Jenny Koo

Mr Steve Lan Yee-fong*

Professor Lau Chak-sing

Mr Lau Chun-hung*

Dr Lui Siu-fai

Miss Yanice Mak Wing-yan*

Mr Moses Mui*

Mrs Gloria Ng Wong Yee-man

Ms Scarlett Pong Oi-lan

Mr Sze Wing-hang

Mr Joseph Tam Sik-yeung

Dr Jeremy Teoh Yuen-chun*
Mr Alexander Wong Kung-ho*
Representatives from the Food and Health Bureau
Representative from the Department of Health
Representative from the Information Services Department
Representative from the Hospital Authority

Secretary:
Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Health)

* New appointees

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (April 16), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 27 patients (19 male and eight female, aged two to 86) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of COVID-19. Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

There are 559 patients under isolation currently. So far, 485 patients who had COVID-19 confirmed or probable infections have been discharged upon recovery.

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.

First round Anti-epidemic Fund making good progress

The Chief Secretary for Administration and Chairman of the Anti-epidemic Fund Steering Committee, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, today (April 16) said that following the Legislative Council Finance Committee's approval of the \$30-billion funding application for the first round Anti-epidemic Fund, the 24 measures under the Fund had been rolled out progressively. Over \$8 billion has already been disbursed under the Fund. Good progress has been made and

many businesses and members of the public are gradually receiving subsidies.

The application period for the Retail Sector Subsidy Scheme launched under the Fund ended on April 12. About 93 000 applications from retailers were received, and about \$800 million in subsidies have been approved. Depending on the vetting progress of applications, it is expected that the disbursement of subsidies could be largely completed by end April.

The Chief Executive announced on April 8 a series of measures to help businesses stay afloat, keep workers in employment, relieve financial burdens of individuals and businesses and assist the economy to recover once the epidemic is contained. To implement the relevant measures, the Government will seek the Legislative Council Finance Committee's funding approval of \$137.5 billion tomorrow (April 17). The funding includes an injection of \$120.5 billion to the Fund to roll out the second round of measures to provide further assistance or relief to members of the public and enterprises hard hit by the current epidemic or affected by anti-epidemic measures.

"I earnestly hope that Legislative Council Members would support and approve this significant funding application at the Finance Committee meeting tomorrow so that the relevant measures could be implemented as soon as possible to address the pressing needs of the community promptly," Mr Cheung said.