

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, after attending a radio programme today (January 4):

Reporter: Regarding the new response plan for new infectious disease, what exact step is the Government taking to better monitor the situation? You said in the programme that the Government has strengthened the monitoring of inbound passengers at the airport, is the Government doing the same at other ports and also the High Speed Rail Terminal?

Secretary for Food and Health: In launching this Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance, we have actually put it to the Serious Response Level. We have already met with different bureaux and related departments to heighten the surveillance, cleaning as well as protection and control of this disease. We have already done that. Different departments such as the Education Bureau, the Social Welfare Department, are already heightening or increasing their vigilance towards this disease. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has also issued letters to private doctors and Chinese medicine practitioners so that they are alerted of the situation. As far as the Hospital Authority is concerned, they are also increasing their infection control measures. For example, they are going to look into the visiting hours, to see if there is a need to restrict the number of people going to the hospitals such as volunteers. There are already other measures which have already put in place before we put this to the Serious Response Level. For examples, we are reporting the number of this notifiable cases every day now and CHP is already trying to increase vigilance not only the airport but also all ports.

Reporter: How is the Government improving the monitoring at other ports?

Secretary for Food and Health: At all these ports, there will be people monitoring incoming people that may have fever. CHP is increasing the manpower to do this. As far as the airport is concerned, there are infrared detecting machines on fever. Not only do they put in place these measures, they are also increasing publicity to alert everybody that have gone to Wuhan so that they are aware of their own health situation. For the general public, everybody should be aware of the situation and increase their own personal hygiene.

Reporter: Should people start wearing mask when we go out now?

Secretary for Food and Health: I think, if you have respiratory symptom, our advice by the Department of Health is that you should wear mask.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)