

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, at a media session at the Legislative Council Complex today (January 17):

Reporter: With the run-up to the Chinese New Year, there may be more tourists coming in and out of Hong Kong, would you consider like requesting them to declare their health status to the authorities? You said you had meeting yesterday, could you give us a brief recap?

Secretary for Food and Health: Regarding the latest development of the Wuhan pneumonia with this new novel coronavirus, I have convened a Steering Committee meeting in accordance with the Serious Response Level under the Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance yesterday. During this meeting, I alerted all participating departments and bureaux in view of the latest situation and the latest risk assessment. Everybody has to be in high vigilance and on guard in case we have a confirmed case in Hong Kong. Given the latest situation that confirmed cases are found in Japan and in Thailand, as well as the latest information from Wuhan, although there is no evidence of human-to-human transmission, they cannot rule out that there is some form of limited human-to-human transmission. Therefore, we have to be on guard and maintain high vigilance, not only our health department and the Hospital Authority (HA) but also everybody in Hong Kong. The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) has expanded the scope of surveillance to include not only those who come back from Wuhan but those who have visited hospitals in the Mainland. This is a new reporting criteria. The DH had already sent letters to all private doctors, private hospitals and Chinese medicine practitioners. The HA is also aware of this latest reporting criteria. As far as the control measures adopted at the boundary is concerned, we have already strengthened all measures at the boundary checkpoints including temperature screenings on all incoming travellers, in particular at the arrival gate in the airport where the passenger from Wuhan arrived as well as the Express Rail Link station. Everyone who comes from Wuhan would have their temperature checked by handheld infrared thermometers. Other than temperature checks, we have also made in-flight announcements as well as at the lobby of Express Rail Link station and also gave out pamphlets to remind travellers of the situation and health advice. Finally, it is also important for everyone in Hong Kong to be on high alert. In case there is a confirmed case in Hong Kong, the Government will be able to respond quickly and swiftly.

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