

CHP investigates outbreak of acute gastroenteritis at primary school in Fanling

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (April 1) investigating an outbreak of acute gastroenteritis (AGE) at a primary school in Fanling, and hence reminded the public and management of institutions to maintain personal and environmental hygiene against AGE.

The outbreak involves 10 boys and nine girls aged 10 to 13, as well as a female staff member, who have developed vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain since March 25. Among them, two sought medical attention and none required hospitalisation. All patients have been in a stable condition.

Officers of the CHP conducted a site visit and provided health advice to the staff of the school concerning proper and thorough disinfection, proper disposal of vomitus, and personal and environmental hygiene. The school has been put under medical surveillance.

The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP advised members of the public to take heed of the following preventive measures against gastroenteritis:

- Ensure proper personal hygiene;
- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food and eating, after using the toilet or after changing diapers;
- Wear gloves when disposing of vomitus or faecal matter, and wash hands afterwards;
- Clean and disinfect contaminated areas or items promptly and thoroughly with diluted household bleach (by adding one part of bleach containing 5.25 per cent sodium hypochlorite to 49 parts of water). Wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Pay attention to food hygiene;
- Use separate utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
- Avoid food that is not thoroughly cooked;
- Drink boiled water; and
- Do not patronise unlicensed food premises or food stalls.

The public may visit the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk) or call the Health Education Hotline (2833 0111) for more information.

Coin Collection Programme

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) today announces a new service schedule of the two Coin Carts under the Coin Collection Programme, for the period of May 20, 2019 up to July 28, 2019. The schedule and other details of the Programme are shown on the HKMA webpage (coincollection.hkma.gov.hk).

Since the launch of the Programme in October 2014, the two Coin Carts have completed 24 cycles of serving the 18 districts on March 10, 2019. The Carts had carried out 559 000 transactions, collecting 460 million coins with a total face value of HK\$647 million during the period. The collected coins are re-circulated to meet demand.

The Coin Carts provide service at locations that are convenient to the public without affecting the normal flow of traffic and pedestrians. Locations that have suitable power supply facilities, such as the Leisure and Cultural Services Department mobile library service locations, are preferred so as to reduce the need for using the Coin Carts' own stand-by generators. This makes the Programme more environmentally friendly. In selecting the service locations, the HKMA has taken into consideration comments and suggestions given by district councils and members of public; and has consulted the Transport Department and the Hong Kong Police Force as necessary.

The two Coin Carts collect coins from members of public in the 18 districts of Hong Kong on a rotating basis. Under normal circumstances each Coin Cart will stay at a location for a week, subject to availability of the parking space and the maintenance schedule of the Cart. Service hours are from 10 am to 7 pm. Each vehicle is equipped with two coin counting machines and operational staff will be present to provide assistance. An electrical wheelchair lift is available for use. Users can choose to exchange coins for banknotes or adding value to their stored value facilities, such as Octopus Cards or e-wallets (including AlipayHK, Octopus O! ePay, Tap&Go, TNG Wallet and WeChat Pay). There is also a Community Chest donation box inside each vehicle. The coin collection service is free of charge.

The HKMA will review the Programme from time and time; and will regularly update the service schedule to give advance notice to the public.

Provisional statistics of retail sales

for February 2019

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released the latest figures on retail sales today (April 1).

The value of total retail sales in February 2019, provisionally estimated at \$40.7 billion, decreased by 10.1% compared with the same month in 2018. The revised estimate of the value of total retail sales in January 2019 increased by 7.0% over a year earlier. For the first two months of 2019 taken together, it was provisionally estimated that the value of total retail sales decreased by 1.6% compared with the same period in 2018.

After netting out the effect of price changes over the same period, the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales in February 2019 decreased by 10.4% compared with a year earlier. The revised estimate of the volume of total retail sales in January 2019 increased by 6.9% over a year earlier. For the first two months of 2019 taken together, the provisional estimate of the total retail sales decreased by 1.8% in volume compared with the same period in 2018.

In interpreting these figures, it should be noted that retail sales tend to show greater volatility in the first two months of a year due to the timing of the Lunar New Year. Consumer spending in the local market normally attains a seasonal high before the festival. As the Lunar New Year fell on February 5 this year but on February 16 last year, it is more appropriate to analyse the retail sales figures for January and February taken together in making year-on-year comparison.

Analysed by broad type of retail outlet in descending order of the provisional estimate of the value of sales and comparing the combined total sales for January and February 2019 with the same period a year earlier, the value of sales of jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts decreased by 2.8%. This was followed by sales of wearing apparel (-3.7% in value); food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (-1.0%); electrical goods and other consumer durable goods, not elsewhere classified (-18.3%); fuels (-1.4%); Chinese drugs and herbs (-1.7%); and optical shops (-2.0%).

On the other hand, the value of sales of medicines and cosmetics increased by 2.3% in the first two months of 2019 over the same period a year earlier. This was followed by sales of commodities in department stores (+4.2% in value); commodities in supermarkets (+1.5%); other consumer goods, not elsewhere classified (+4.6%); motor vehicles and parts (+3.7%); footwear, allied products and other clothing accessories (+1.3%); furniture and fixtures (+3.4%); and books, newspapers, stationery and gifts (+1.7%).

Based on the seasonally adjusted series, the provisional estimate of the value of total retail sales decreased by 0.6% in the three months ending February 2019 compared with the preceding three-month period, while the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales decreased by 1.2%.

These retail sales statistics measure the sales receipts in respect of goods sold by local retail establishments and are primarily intended for gauging the short-term business performance of the local retail sector. They cover consumer spending on goods but not on services (such as those on housing, catering, medical care and health services, transport and communication, financial services, education and entertainment) which account for over 50% of the overall consumer spending. Moreover, they include spending on goods in Hong Kong by visitors but exclude spending outside Hong Kong by Hong Kong residents. Hence they should not be regarded as indicators for measuring overall consumer spending.

Users interested in the trend of overall consumer spending should refer to the data series of private consumption expenditure (PCE), which is a major component of the Gross Domestic Product published at quarterly intervals. Compiled from a wide range of data sources, PCE covers consumer spending on both goods (including goods purchased from all channels) and services by Hong Kong residents whether locally or abroad. Please refer to the C&SD publication "Gross Domestic Product (Quarterly)" for more details.

Commentary

A government spokesman said that taking the first two months of 2019 together to remove the effects of the difference in timing of the Lunar New Year holidays, retail sales recorded a modest decline over a year earlier. The weak performance of retail sales in recent months reflected that consumption sentiment remained cautious amid various external uncertainties.

The spokesman pointed out further that, the near-term outlook for retail sales should continue to be affected by moderating global economic growth and various external uncertainties, but the full employment situation and the sustained growth in inbound tourism should provide some support. The Government will closely monitor the situation.

Further information

Table 1 presents the revised figures on value index and value of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet for January 2019 as well as the provisional figures for February 2019. The provisional figures on the value of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet as well as the corresponding year-on-year changes for the first two months of 2019 taken together are also shown.

Table 2 presents the revised figures on volume index of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet for January 2019 as well as the provisional figures for February 2019. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first two months of 2019 taken together are also shown.

Table 3 shows the movements of the value and volume of total retail sales in terms of the year-on-year rate of change for a month compared with the same month in the preceding year based on the original series, and in terms of the rate of change for a three-month period compared with the

preceding three-month period based on the seasonally adjusted series.

The classification of retail establishments follows the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC) Version 2.0, which is used in various economic surveys for classifying economic units into different industry classes.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Monthly Survey of Retail Sales". Users can download this publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD

(www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp320.jsp?productCode=B1080003).

Alternatively, the historical series of retail sales statistics can be downloaded in the form of a statistical table at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp320.jsp?productCode=D5600089).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Distribution Services Statistics Section of C&SD (Tel: 3903 7400; email: mrs@censtatd.gov.hk).

[Missing couple in North Point located](#)

A couple who went missing in North Point has been located.

Lam Chi-tat, aged 71, and his 60-year-old wife, Tsim Fung-ye, were found missing after they left an elderly home on North Point Road on March 1 morning. Staff of the elderly home made a report to Police on March 2.

The couple was located on Hennessy Road in Wan Chai this morning (April 1). They sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

[Entries invited for 2019 Hong Kong Awards for Industries](#)

The 2019 Hong Kong Awards for Industries (HKAI) is open for entries from today (April 1). Hong Kong companies in the manufacturing and services sectors are invited to join. The closing date is June 6.

Supported by the Government, the HKAI aims to recognise the outstanding achievements of Hong Kong enterprises in pursuit of high technology and high value-added activities, and to commend excellence in various aspects of their performance. The HKAI also helps to enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong

industries and promote Hong Kong brands.

The 2019 HKAI comprises seven categories, each run by an Organiser:

| Category | Organiser |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Consumer Product Design | Federation of Hong Kong Industries |
| Equipment and Machinery Design | The Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong |
| Customer Service | Hong Kong Retail Management Association |
| Innovation and Creativity | Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce |
| Smart Productivity | Hong Kong Productivity Council |
| Technological Achievement | Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation |
| Upgrading and Transformation | Hong Kong Young Industrialists Council |

Adjudication in each award category is carried out by a preliminary judging panel arranged by individual Organisers. A final judging panel will be convened to decide the winners. One grand award will be presented to the most outstanding entry in each category. Other deserving entries will be presented with an award or a certificate of merit. All award winners are entitled to display the official logo of the HKAI and receive the HKAI trophy or certificate as a permanent memento of their achievements.

The awards presentation ceremony will be held in December 2019 at the Grand Hall of the Hong Kong Science Park.

Entry forms and brochures are now available from the respective Organisers. They can also be downloaded from the HKAI website at www.hkindustryaward.org.

The HKAI was launched in 2005 by merging the former Hong Kong Awards for Industry and the former Hong Kong Awards for Services, established in 1989 and 1997 respectively. Over the years, the HKAI has recognised and commended the excellent performance of about 1,110 companies.

For further information, please visit the HKAI website at www.hkindustryaward.org or contact the respective Organisers (see contact details on the website) or the Secretariat of the Organising Committee of the HKAI at hkai@tid.gov.hk or Tel: 2398 5551.