

SFH requests private testing service providers to significantly ramp up COVID-19 testing capacity (with photo)

â€‹The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, had a meeting with several private testing service providers today (February 4) and requested them to ramp up their COVID-19 testing capacity with a view to coping with the testing demand arising from the Government's testing operations carried out as anti-epidemic measures and voluntary testing by members of the public.

At the meeting, Professor Chan; the Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Health), Mr Thomas Chan; and the Under Secretary for Food and Health, Dr Chui Tak-yi, discussed with testing service providers how to further ramp up testing capacity including assistance for testing service providers in the aspects of manpower, resources and operation.

Professor Chan said, "The current epidemic situation in Hong Kong is of grave concern. Over 100 confirmed cases were recorded daily in the past few consecutive days, including dozens of cases with unknown sources, extending across various districts in the city and different industry sectors. We expect that the number of infected cases may show a significant increase after the Lunar New Year. The risk of having an exponential surge is very high. To prevent the epidemic situation from further deteriorating, the Government has the pressing need to roll out anti-epidemic initiatives through a multi-pronged approach including maintaining the most stringent social distancing measures to reduce flows of people and enhancing testing capacity for the virus significantly so as to cope with the 'restriction-testing declaration' operations, compulsory testing and voluntary testing. I hope that citizens could fully co-operate to work with us in achieving the objective of early identification, early isolation and early treatment.

"The testing demand arising from various testing operations by the Government and the voluntary testing of members of public has increased notably in the past few weeks. The testing capacity has also been raised accordingly. With the unfailing support from the testing service providers as well as the support of the Guangdong Provincial Government in the aspects of resources and manpower to enhance the testing capacity, the Government is aiming to further increase the daily maximum capacity of public and private laboratories from approximately 100 000 tests to about 200 000 tests or even higher before mid-February. We will also co-operate with a testing service provider to set up a dedicated laboratory at Ma On Shan Sports Centre, with a view to further increasing the daily testing capacity to 300 000 tests."

Professor Chan said that the Government would also adopt a more proactive testing strategy to identify patients and cut transmission chains in the community as early as possible in response to the epidemic

development. She called for active co-operation from citizens in various testing operations.

Separately, the Home Affairs Department has distributed COVID-19 rapid test kits to residents in various districts during the past two weeks, enabling citizens to conduct voluntary testing.

She also said, as a reminder to the public, "We must stay highly vigilant and follow all prevention and anti-epidemic measures closely. Citizens should in particular pay attention to the premises included in the compulsory testing notices announced by the Government and undergo testing accordingly. If they consider themselves at higher risk or show any mild symptoms, they should undergo tests as soon as possible."

Lastly, Professor Chan expressed her heartfelt thanks to the testing service providers for their steadfast support for the Government in the past two years on the anti-epidemic front. Apart from running the community testing centres (CTCs), they have also from time to time deployed staff to set up mobile specimen collection stations in specific districts within short time frames in connection with the Government's anti-epidemic strategy. During the Lunar New Year holidays, all CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations provided testing services as usual to members of the public to fight the virus together.



[Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Sham Shui Po](#)

The Government today (February 4) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" effective

from 7pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Sham Shui Po (i.e. The buildings of 107-131 Apliu Street (odd numbers), 11-17 Shek Kip Mei Street (odd numbers), 140-164 Yu Chau Street (even numbers), 112-126 Nam Cheong Street (even numbers), 195-223A Tai Nan Street (odd numbers), 1F Shek Kip Mei Street, 238-272 Lai Chi Kok Road (even numbers) and 66-72 Nam Cheong Street (even numbers), excluding the shops on the ground floor. See Annex) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at about 7am tomorrow (February 5).

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As the sewage discharged from the above buildings were tested positive for COVID-19, it is suspected that there are asymptomatic patients in the building. Given the risk of infection in the relevant area is assessed to be likely higher, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 1am tomorrow. Arrangements will be made for persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo a nucleic acid test at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will arrange for door-to-door specimen collection for people with impaired mobility and elderly persons.

The Government spokesman said, "We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around 7am tomorrow. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to individuals who are not residents in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his/her personal information for contact purposes.

According to the compulsory testing notice to be issued today, any person who had been present at the above buildings, including the shops on

the ground floor, for more than two hours from January 22 to February 4, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before February 6, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, and having considered relevant infection risks, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

[HAD distributes complimentary COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff in Discovery Bay \(with photo\)](#)

â€‹In the light of positive test results for the COVID-19 virus from some sewage samples collected in Discovery Bay, the Home Affairs Department (including the Islands District Office) today (February 4) distributed a total of about 22 000 COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff within the area for voluntary testing through a property management company in Discovery Bay, in the hope of identifying infected persons early, so as to better protect the infected persons and their families. However, the Government stresses that rapid test kit testing is not a substitute for the Government's compulsory testing requirement.

For more information on the use of the rapid test kits, residents may refer to the following link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjLzD3-gab4.

The Government appeals for the co-operation of members of the public to safeguard the health of themselves and their families by undergoing testing on a voluntary basis and fighting the virus together. The Government urges

all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases that tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons to reduce the transmission risks of COVID-19.



Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Wong Tai Sin

â€‹The Government today (February 4) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" (declaration) effective from 7.30pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Wong Tai Sin (i.e. Block 14, Tsui Chuk Garden, Wong Tai Sin. See Annex) are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at about 7.30am tomorrow (February 5).

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As a case tested positive who has lived in the abovementioned building was detected recently, and the test result involved a mutant strain, the risk of infection in the relevant area is assessed to be likely higher, so the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 12.30am tomorrow. Arrangements will be made for persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo a nucleic acid test at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will arrange for door-to-door specimen collection for people with impaired mobility and elderly persons.

The Government spokesman said, "We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around 7.30am tomorrow. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to individuals who are not residents in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his/her personal information for contact purposes.

Persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing today, and are able to provide the SMS notification through a mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again. However, they are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. Also, according to the compulsory testing notice to be issued today, any person who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from January 19, 2022 to February 4, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before February 6, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons are also required to undergo testing.

In addition, in accordance with the latest arrangement, persons who resided in the same building as the case involving a mutant strain are required to undergo compulsory testing on days 2, 3, 4 and 7 counting from the day subsequent to that when the case last stayed in that building before being admitted to hospital for treatment or leaving Hong Kong.

The Home Affairs Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2835 1473) which starts operation at 7.30pm today for residents restricted by the declaration

to make enquiries and seek assistance. The Social Welfare Department will also provide assistance to the affected persons.

The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Public urged to support World Cancer Day 2022

The Department of Health (DH) today (February 4) urged members of the public to support World Cancer Day 2022 by adopting a healthy lifestyle and initiating early detection of disease.

World Cancer Day has been designated on February 4 every year by the Union for International Cancer Control since 2000 to increase community understanding of challenges posed by cancer and to bring the world together in the fight against the disease. Under the theme "Close the Care Gap", World Cancer Day 2022 is about envisioning a future where all people live healthier lives and have better access to healthcare services and cancer treatments.

Cancer is a major public health issue. In 2019, more than 35 000 new cancer cases were diagnosed in Hong Kong, and the five most common cancers were lung, colorectal, breast, prostate and liver cancers. In view of population growth and ageing, the number of new cancer cases and the related healthcare demands are expected to increase.

Prevention is better than cure. About 40 per cent of all cancers can be prevented by adopting a healthy lifestyle and reducing exposure to major risk factors. "We urge the public to avoid tobacco smoking, refrain from alcohol drinking, be physically active, have a balanced diet and maintain a healthy body weight and waist circumference to reduce the risk of developing cancer," a spokesman for the DH advised. Health advice on prevention of various cancers is also available on the Cancer Online Resource Hub (www.cancer.gov.hk).

In addition to primary prevention, the Government adopts an evidence-based approach in regard to implementation of cancer screening, so as to

achieve early diagnosis of cancer for initiating early treatment and thus improving treatment outcomes. In this connection, the DH has fully implemented screening programmes for cervical cancer and colorectal cancer, and has launched the Breast Cancer Screening Pilot Programme (BCSPP).

The Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme (CRCSP) subsidises asymptomatic Hong Kong residents aged between 50 and 75 to undergo screening tests for colorectal cancer. The Cervical Screening Programme (CSP) encourages women aged 25 to 64 who have had sexual experience to have regular cervical screening as an effective way of preventing cervical cancer. Moreover, the two-year BCSPP has been rolled out to provide risk-based breast cancer screening services for eligible women in the three Women Health Centres and the 18 Elderly Health Centres of the DH in September and December last year respectively. The Cancer Expert Working Group on Cancer Prevention and Screening recommends women aged between 44 and 69 with certain combinations of personalised risk factors that put them at increased risk of breast cancer to consider mammography screening every two years. Under the BCSPP, the DH uses the breast cancer risk assessment tool for local women (www.cancer.gov.hk/bctool) to assess the risk of developing breast cancer.

The spokesman calls on the public to talk to their doctor to understand the benefits and limitations of screening tests before making an informed decision to undergo cancer screening. For more information, the public may visit the websites of the CRCSP (www.colonscreen.gov.hk) and the CSP (www.cervicalscreening.gov.hk). Details of the BCSPP are available at the websites of Family Health Service (www.fhs.gov.hk) and Elderly Health Service (www.elderly.gov.hk).

The spokesman also reminds members of the public that while people of all ages can be infected with COVID-19, people with underlying chronic non-communicable diseases, including those with cancer, are particularly vulnerable to severe and fatal COVID-19 infection. COVID-19 vaccines are effective in reducing the risk of developing severe complications against and death from COVID-19 infection. Unless there is contraindication, members of the public, including people with cancer, should get COVID-19 vaccines as soon as possible for their personal protection. Generally speaking, if patients' cancer is in remission or they are not receiving active cancer treatment, their eligibility to receive COVID-19 vaccine is the same as for other people without cancer. People receiving active cancer treatment should discuss with their oncology doctor about the best timing to receive COVID-19 vaccine. It is recommended that the two doses of COVID-19 vaccination be completed either before the start or after the completion of any active cancer treatment (including chemotherapy, targeted therapy and/or immunotherapy). For more information about the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, including vaccination venues and making an online booking for vaccination, please visit www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en.

To know more about World Cancer Day, please visit www.worldcancerday.org.