

# Hong Kong Advisory Council on AIDS concerned with rising situation of late presenters

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Advisory Council on AIDS:

The Hong Kong Advisory Council on AIDS (ACA) convened a meeting today (November 15). The ACA members were briefed by the Department of Health (DH) on the latest situation of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection and recent trends in Hong Kong, particularly the rising proportion of late presenters among newly reported cases, and its impact on local HIV control efforts.

Late presenters refer to individuals whose CD4 cells (one kind of immune cell) are being attacked by the virus and have decreased to a very low level (CD4 count of less than 200 cells/mm<sup>3</sup>) at the time of HIV diagnosis. Late presentation indicates that these individuals were not diagnosed and put on treatment in a timely way at an earlier stage of infection, resulting in a weakened immune system. Late presentation can lead to an increased risk of opportunistic infections and malignancies, leading to a higher mortality rate. In addition, as a result of an unsuppressed viral load, late presenters contribute to an increased risk of HIV transmission in the community, impacting the overall effectiveness of HIV control efforts and posing a significant burden to the healthcare system.

The ACA observed an increasing proportion of late presenters among newly reported cases in Hong Kong, rising from 28.5 per cent in 2014 to 47 per cent in 2023, similar to that observed overseas. An older age at diagnosis, and a heterosexual route of transmission are more commonly associated with late presentation. According to the Recommended HIV/AIDS Strategies for Hong Kong (2022-2027) published by the ACA in 2022, greater effort is needed to scale up testing and to promote universal testing to become a norm for the key communities, such as maintaining the conventional facility-based testing services and introducing new testing modalities including mobile testing and HIV self-testing. In view of the latest situation, the ACA recommends that normalisation of HIV testing among the non-key population, enabling people with HIV who are unaware of their status to receive a timely diagnosis and treatment, to be one of the crucial strategies to address the rising trend of late presentation.

During the meeting, the DH briefed members on the newly published "Recommendations on HIV Testing in Hong Kong" (The Recommendations) by the Scientific Committee on AIDS and STI. Having taken into consideration the latest local epidemiology, scientific evidence, recommendations from the World Health Organization and overseas practices, the Recommendations serve to provide references and practical guidance to healthcare professionals and frontline service providers in the community. The Recommendations contain

sections on who to get tested, how to test, consent, post-test care and referral pathway. Among them, it is recommended that people who have had sex should get HIV testing at least once to keep track of their health status, and that people with risk behaviours should undergo regular screenings. Members of the ACA support the Recommendations, agreeing that it would encourage HIV testing among non-key populations, help normalise HIV testing and facilitate destigmatisation of HIV infection and HIV testing among the general public.

Details of the Recommendations are available on the CHP's website at [www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/24003.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/24003.html).

Since its establishment in 1990, the ACA has been keeping in view local and international trends and developments relating to HIV infection and AIDS. It has also played a pivotal role in advising the Government on policies relating to the prevention, care and control of HIV/AIDS in Hong Kong. The ACA has published six sets of recommended HIV/AIDS strategies which have served as blueprints for the HIV response in Hong Kong.

For more information on the previous and latest recommended HIV/AIDS strategies published by the ACA, please visit the ACA website ([www.aca.gov.hk/english/index.html](http://www.aca.gov.hk/english/index.html)). For information about the local situation and programme on AIDS, please visit the website of the Virtual AIDS Office of the DH ([www.aids.gov.hk](http://www.aids.gov.hk)).

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## **[Hong Kong Cybersecurity Attack and Defence Drill 2024 launched today \(with photos\)](#)**

The Government launched Hong Kong's first Cybersecurity Attack and Defence Drill today (November 15). The drill, which will span three days for a total of 60 hours, is spearheaded by the Digital Policy Office (DPO) in collaboration with the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force, the Hong Kong Internet Registration Corporation Limited, and the Hong Kong Institute of Information Technology (HKIIT). Various government departments and public organisations have been invited to participate in the exercise, which aims to enhance their technical skills, experience, and overall defensive capabilities against cyberattacks.

During the drill, cybersecurity professionals acting as attackers (the Red Teams) perform simulated cyberattacks in a strictly controlled environment on participating organisations' designated information systems, which are already in operation to identify potential security risks and vulnerabilities. The defenders (the Blue Teams) deploy their technical skills

and strategies to fend off these attacks, thereby strengthening their incident response capabilities and enhancing their experience.

At the opening ceremony, the Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, Professor Sun Dong, explained that the ultimate concept of the drill is "knowing your opponent and yourself well". He noted that the first Hong Kong Cybersecurity Attack and Defence Drill spearheaded by the DPO examines the defence capabilities of government departments and public organisations through practical combat scenarios on Internet-facing information systems, while carrying out in-depth security assessments and vulnerability detection activities of the relevant systems at the same time.

Twelve Blue Teams from nine government departments and three public organisations are participating with their designated information systems in the drill. The five Red Teams, meanwhile, comprise members from the Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute, the Hong Kong College of Technology, the HKIIT, and two winning teams from the Cyber Attack and Defence Elite Training cum Tournament held earlier. The DPO has also invited eight cybersecurity firms from the Mainland with extensive drill experience to provide technical support and advice to both the Red and Blue Teams. Representatives from more than 50 organisations are also attending as observers to learn more about the drill process, to serve as a reference for future drills.



## [Transport Department alerts public to fraudulent websites purported to be from HKeToll](#)

The Transport Department (TD) today (November 15) alerted members of the public to fraudulent website addresses that pretend to be the HKeToll (see Annex) and seek to deceive users into making payments and obtain their credit card information.

The TD clarifies that the fraudulent websites have no connection with the HKeToll and has referred the case to the Police for follow-up. The TD reiterates that the HKeToll only uses "#HKeToll" as the sender ID for issuing SMS messages to users or vehicle owners. Users or vehicle owners must log in to the HKeToll website ([hketoll.gov.hk](http://hketoll.gov.hk)) or mobile app to pay outstanding tolls online.

Members of the public should stay alert when receiving messages without the prefix "#" but purportedly issued by the HKeToll or any unidentified messages, and should not visit suspicious websites or disclose any personal information. Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the websites concerned should contact the Police. For enquiries about the HKeToll, please call 3853 7333.

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## [Australia-based Real Asset Management Group expands Hong Kong operations \(with photo\)](#)

Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) announced today (November 15) that Real Asset Management Group (RAM) has extended its business offerings to retail products and expanded its Hong Kong operations by hiring a new team to structure, manage and distribute its new retail funds.

The Director-General of Investment Promotion for InvestHK, Ms Alpha Lau, said, "I am delighted that RAM has chosen Hong Kong as the destination for its further expansion. RAM's presence here will enrich Hong Kong's offerings for global investors, as it brings expertise and experience in providing investment solutions in credit, real estate, and private equity markets."

She added, "There is strong demand from New CIES (New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme) investors since the scheme's inception in March this year,

providing a strong increase in opportunities for fund firms and asset management companies to expand their business in Hong Kong."

Founder and Executive Chairman of RAM, Mr Scott Wehl, said, "We have a decade-long history in Hong Kong and are excited about the opportunities ahead. This retail product expansion underscores our ongoing commitment to investing in the city, the largest international asset management hub in Asia. It also enhances investment opportunities for our investors."

He added, "To support our expanded business operations, we have strengthened our investment management and distribution teams by adding new talent to better meet the needs of local investors. We will continue to leverage our expertise in credit, real estate, and private equity to develop new investment solutions that cater to both local and international investors."

RAM is an alternative asset manager for institutions and wealthy families globally, and is headquartered in Sydney, Australia. As of the end of October, RAM had a pan-Asia presence with five offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Shanghai, and Hong Kong, and a team of over 170 finance professionals managing more than HK\$27 billion in assets.

RAM Investment Advisors Limited was incorporated in Hong Kong in May 2014 as a private company limited by shares. It is regulated by the Securities and Futures Commission of Hong Kong and holds licenses to carry out Type 1 (Dealing in Securities), Type 4 (Advising on Securities), and Type 9 (Asset Management) regulated activities, subject to the applicable licensing condition.

For more information about RAM, please visit [ramgroup.com.hk](http://ramgroup.com.hk).

To obtain a copy of the photos, please visit [www.flickr.com/photos/investhk/albums/72177720321955233](https://www.flickr.com/photos/investhk/albums/72177720321955233).



# Big Wave Bay Beach reopened

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (November 15) that the shark prevention net at Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island, has been repaired, and the beach is reopened.

The beach was temporarily closed earlier for shark prevention net maintenance work.