

CHP investigates eight additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 0.00am, November 16, the CHP was investigating eight additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 5 467 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 5 466 confirmed cases and one probable case).

All the newly reported cases announced had a travel history during the incubation period.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

A spokesman for the CHP said, "During the CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases, we will compile and upload (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/building_list_eng.pdf) a list of buildings that confirmed patients had visited from two days before the onset of symptoms. Given that cases of local infection continue to occur from time to time, members of the public are urged to seek medical attention immediately if they believe that they had visited the same place at an identical time with a confirmed patient and feel unwell subsequently. If they remain asymptomatic but are concerned that they have been infected, they can also visit the Hospital Authority's designated general out-patient clinics (www.ha.org.hk/haho/ho/covid-19/GOPC_extend_EN.pdf) to obtain specimen collection packs and collect deep throat saliva specimens for free COVID-19 testing."

In view of the severe epidemic situation, the CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

The spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the

community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.

UGC supports universities to strengthen student support services amidst pandemic

The following is issued on behalf of the University Grants Committee:

The University Grants Committee (UGC) will allocate \$50 million to the eight UGC-funded universities for strengthening their student support services in response to the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The universities will take forward various supporting initiatives covering the areas of psychological counselling, mental well-being and career planning and development, as well as physical fitness and healthy lifestyle, to take care of the different needs of students.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused elevated stress and anxiety among university students as they face disruption to their studies and job search, while universities face difficulties in delivering face-to-face student support services. Having invited the eight universities to submit proposals on strengthening student support services earlier, the UGC has approved a one-off allocation of \$50 million to render support.

The eight universities will use the funding to take forward a total of 75 initiatives in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 academic years. They will expand existing services or launch new ones, such as providing psychological counselling services via the Internet, organising a series of seminars and activities for promoting mental health, hosting virtual career fairs and workshops for job hunters, and developing mobile apps on brisk walking/hiking trails within the campus. These initiatives will enable the universities to provide services tailored to the present circumstances, thereby supporting their students to tide over difficult times.

The Chairman of the UGC, Mr Carlson Tong, said, "The pandemic has brought about an unprecedented impact on Hong Kong, and the UGC cares about our students who face all kinds of challenges amidst the lingering pandemic. Apart from research grants to universities for pandemic-related projects as announced earlier, the UGC hopes to join hands with our universities and students and soldier on in this ongoing battle against the pandemic through this one-off contribution. We will also take this opportunity to encourage innovation among universities in developing a more diverse range of student support services through different delivery means."

Furthermore, to help university students with special educational needs (SEN) adapt to campus life, the UGC has allocated funding to the UGC-funded universities twice for purchasing aids, arranging training and organising inclusion activities with a view to enhancing their support for such students. The UGC will allocate an additional \$30 million to sustain its

support. Universities may use the additional funding to offer learning experiences customised to the individual circumstances of SEN students, thereby further promoting an inclusive culture on campus.

For details of initiatives by the eight UGC-funded universities to strengthen their student support services, please contact the student affairs offices of individual universities.

Government seeks industry views on arrangement for next Standing Offer Agreement for Quality Professional Services

The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) released today (November 16) a consultation paper to invite views from the information technology (IT) industry on the Government's procurement arrangement for IT professional services.

The Government has been striving to foster development of the local IT industry, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), by enlisting them in government IT projects and implementing the Standing Offer Agreement for Quality Professional Services (SOA-QPS) as part of the Government's IT outsourcing strategy. The SOA-QPS4 in use will expire in the second half of next year. In preparation for the next SOA-QPS, the OGCIO today launched a one-month consultation on improvements to the present arrangement so as to cope with the latest changes in the IT market and increase the chances for SMEs to join the SOA-QPS.

The OGCIO is considering a number of enhancement proposals, such as removing the upper limit of the number of contractors, reorganising existing service categories in order to encourage more contractors to bid for individual projects and adjusting the contract limit of specific service categories to increase the opportunities for SMEs to participate in government IT projects. "To foster the development of the local IT industry, we welcome the industry to express its views, especially on the limit on the number of contractors for each category/group, merging or separation of existing service categories, and the demarcation limit of minor and major groups in terms of the contract value under certain service categories," a spokesman for the OGCIO said.

The Government has all along adopted a bulk supply arrangement for procuring IT professional services, and introduced in April 2019 a policy to embrace innovation in government procurement. The Government enters into a

number of SOA-QPSs with suppliers selected through open tendering so as to enhance efficiency in procurement and expedite the process for contract signing by sparing departments from going through tendering procedures for each and every acquisition. Departments can invite proposals and make a selection from these contractors to undertake individual IT projects based on technical and price assessments within the validity period of the SOA-QPSs.

Up to October 2020, more than 1 500 contracts were awarded with an accumulated contract value of over \$1.5 billion under the SOA-QPS4. These contracts covered a wide range of services including feasibility studies, systems analysis and design, system implementation, system maintenance, information security and independent testing.

The consultation paper is now available on the OGCI0 website at www.ogcio.gov.hk/en/news/consultations/. Interested parties may refer to the consultation paper for details and forward their comments and suggestions on or before December 15, 2020, by emailing qps_consultation@ogcio.gov.hk.

[Hung Ka Po Cantonese Opera Troupe to return to stage in December](#)

The Hung Ka Po Cantonese Opera Troupe will stage two works, namely "Chuncao Breaks into the Trial Court" and "An Official's Promotion – a newly adapted Cantonese Opera", in December and January. Details are as follows:

"Chuncao Breaks into the Trial Court"

Playwright: Law Ka-ying

7.30pm, December 8 (Tuesday)

Auditorium, Tai Po Civic Centre

Tickets: \$140, \$180 and \$240

Cast: Loong Koon-tin, Cheng Wing-mui, Chan Hung-chun, Lui Hung-kwong, Yat Dim-hung, Wang Kit-ching, Lai Yiu-wai, Leung Fei-tung

The Prime Minister's daughter Li Banyue goes to Huashan on an incense-offering pilgrimage with her maid, Chuncao, and is harassed by the son of the Minister of Civil Service, Wu Du. Xue Meiting happens to pass by and comes to their rescue. Unfortunately, Xue kills Wu by accident and is taken into custody and sent to the court. Wu's mother tries to flog Xue to death for revenge. In a desperate attempt to save Xue, Chuncao barges into the court and lies that Xue is the Prime Minister's son-in-law. All officials send gifts and congratulations. Even the Emperor bestows a plaque to mark the happy occasion, and the Prime Minister eventually agrees to the marriage.

"An Official's Promotion – a newly adapted Cantonese Opera"

Adaptation: Loong Koon-tin, Chan Hung-chun, Lai Yiu-wai

7.30pm, January 26 (Tuesday)
Auditorium, Ko Shan Theatre New Wing
Tickets: \$140, \$240 and \$340

2.15pm, January 31 (Sunday)
Auditorium, Yuen Long Theatre
Tickets: \$140, \$220 and \$340

Cast: Loong Koon-tin, Cheng Wing-mui, Chan Hung-chun, Lui Hung-kwong, Yat Dim-hung, Fu Shu-wang, Wang Kit-ching, Vong Seng-pan, Siu Wing-yee

Adapted from the Ping opera and Fujian opera work "The Demotion", the story of "An Official's Promotion" sees Bian Yixiao get demoted by the newly appointed Inspector of Three Provinces, Cui Yunlong, due to Bian's marriage to a courtesan, Zhang Xiuyu. When Bian has a case to investigate, he disguises himself as a fortune teller and goes to a teahouse to gather clues. There he meets Cui, who is also undercover as a doctor. The two become friends, and Bian takes Cui home to stay. Later, Bian lets Cui take his place in presiding at court and Cui deliberately frees a prime suspect. Bian, angry at the misjudgement, sends Cui to jail. His wife also takes Cui to task for not exercising justice. At this point, Cui is finally convinced that Bian and Zhang are a couple of upright principles and feels guilty for demoting Bian.

The performances by the Hung Ka Po Cantonese Opera Troupe are presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Tickets are now available at URBIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7325 or visit

www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/chinese_opera/programs_948.html. Ticket holders of "An Official's Promotion – a newly adapted Cantonese Opera" originally scheduled for March 8 (Sunday) at the Auditorium of the Yuen Long Theatre can keep the original tickets intact (with stubs) to attend the rescheduled performance on January 31.

A pre-performance talk and a post-performance talk in Cantonese will be held. The pre-performance talk will be held at 7.30pm tomorrow (November 17) at AC2, 4/F, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, and the post-performance talk at 2.30pm on March 7, 2021 (Sunday) at Function Room, 4/F, Ko Shan Theatre New Wing. Speakers will include Loong Koon-tin, Cheng Wing-mui and Chan Hung-chun. Admission is free. Telephone registration is required and can be made by calling 2268 7267 after 10am. Limited seats are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Details can be found on the above website.

[Statement by ExCo Non-official Members](#)

on the fatal fire in Yau Ma Tei

The following is issued on behalf of the Executive Council Secretariat:

The Non-official Members of the Executive Council (ExCo) today (November 16) expressed profound sadness at the multiple deaths and injuries caused by the fire in Yau Ma Tei last night (November 15). They offer their deepest condolences to the bereaved families of those who passed away and hope for the speedy recovery of those injured. The ExCo Non-official Members believe that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government would render all possible assistance to the families of the victims.