

# Task Group to look into sustainability of Hospital Authority

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) Chairman Mr Henry Fan today (December 19) announced the establishment of a Task Group on Sustainability to look into major sustainability issues of the HA following the deliberation and approval by the HA Board at the Administrative Operational Meeting.

"During earlier discussions in the Board, there have been concerns that the HA's operation would not be sustainable in the long run against the ever-growing demand for service," said Mr Fan.

"Having regard to the HA's statutory responsibility to advise the Government of the needs and resources required for public hospital services, we should critically examine the major sustainability challenges we are facing, with a view to formulating strategic directions for the HA.

"The formulation of strategic directions is important for HA medium and long-term planning. With that, the HA could formulate concrete proposals for consideration by the established governance of the Board for implementation subject to required resource support," added Mr Fan.

While there is an array of issues affecting the HA's sustainability, the Task Group will focus on the following priority items, taking into account their urgency and impact:

1. Strategy for retaining manpower;
2. Strategy for managing the waiting time of first attendance of specialist out-patient clinic; and
3. Strategy for developing smart hospitals.

Membership of the Task Group has been extended to all interested Board Members for participation and inclusion of talents and expertise. A total of 17 HA Board Members have agreed to join, including the Chairman, Mr Fan.

The Task Group will commence work shortly and will regularly report to the HA Executive Committee, with periodic reports of major progress to the HA Board as appropriate.

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# Specialist outpatient services receive positive rating from nearly 90 per cent of respondents in patient survey

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) Board today (December 19) discussed and endorsed the Report of the 2018 Patient Experience Survey on Specialist Outpatient Service. The Survey revealed that the proportion of respondents who gave a positive rating for their overall specialist outpatient experience had increased to nearly 90 per cent, as compared with the data of a similar survey conducted in 2014. The Survey results will help the HA better understand the needs of the patients and further enhance its service quality.

The Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care of the Faculty of Medicine of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (JCSPHPC) was commissioned by the HA to conduct the Survey from July 2018 to March 2019. Around 14 000 randomly selected patients attending 26 selected Specialist Outpatient Clinics (SOPCs) were interviewed by phone. The Survey examined the core dimensions of patient care, covering the patient journey from before appointment to leaving the clinic.

The Principal Investigator of the Survey, Professor Eliza Wong of the JCSPHPC, said that the overall response rate of the Survey was 78 per cent. The findings revealed an overall positive experience in specialist outpatient services with around 90 per cent of the respondents rating 7 or above (along a scoring scale of 0 to 10). The mean score of the overall experience across the 26 SOPCs was 7.9. The patient experience was also similar across the 26 SOPCs. A similar survey of around 14 000 patients conducted in 2014 found that 84 per cent of the respondents rated the overall experience as positive with the mean score being 7.7.

The majority of the respondents gave high ratings towards multiple care aspects including "doctors providing clear and understandable answers to important questions", "confidence and trust in doctors", "provision of clear and understandable information on how to take medication and their purposes", "enough information given to patients' family members" and "being treated with respect and dignity".

"Areas with relatively low scores included 'choice of appointment time and information on waiting time', 'provision of post-discharge information on danger signals and contact' and 'posters about hand sanitation in SOPCs'," Professor Wong added.

The HA Director (Quality and Safety), Dr Chung Kin-lai, said, "The HA realises patients' expectations of the services of SOPCs but also hopes that patients could understand the HA is facing tremendous demand in public

hospital services. The HA will study the findings of the Survey in detail to continuously improve the quality of specialist outpatient services, for example, by exploring how to provide patients with more post-discharge information on self-care. Moreover, the HA is developing a Queue Management System through which patients could know the queuing time required for consultation." He said he was deeply grateful to patients for their support and positive ratings in the Survey. He also expressed his gratitude to front-line staff for their efforts and contributions amidst the heavy workload in the SOPCs.

Dr Chung also said, "The HA will continue to carry out regular surveys to help map the service development direction and formulate improvement measures."

Members of the public are welcome to browse the full Report of the Survey, which can be accessed online under "Special Reports" in the "Corporate News" section of the HA website ([www.ha.org.hk](http://www.ha.org.hk)).

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## [Men given suspended jail sentence and fines for keeping and operating guesthouses illegally](#)

Two men were charged with contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts and the Shatin Magistrates' Courts today (December 19). One man was sentenced to four weeks' imprisonment, suspended for three years, and fined \$18,000, and the other man was fined \$10,000.

The courts heard that in January and April this year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected two suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Paterson Street in Causeway Bay and Hoi Pong Street in Tap Mun. During the inspections, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented rooms in the guesthouses on a daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, the guesthouses did not possess licences under the Ordinance on the days of inspection. The men responsible for keeping and operating the guesthouses were charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

Furthermore, OLA officers inspected a licensed guesthouse on Paterson Street in Causeway Bay in March this year. This guesthouse was operated by the man who kept the aforementioned unlicensed guesthouse on the same

street. The officers found that the actual layout of the premises deviated from the registered drawings and the alteration had not been approved by the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Authority. Conditions 3 and 17 of the licence were breached. Therefore, the man responsible for operating the premises was charged with contravening section 21(3)(a) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that keeping, operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and can lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email ([hadlaenq@had.gov.hk](mailto:hadlaenq@had.gov.hk)), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website ([www.hadla.gov.hk](http://www.hadla.gov.hk)), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

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## Suspected MERS case reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (December 19) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places they visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Female
Age	57
Affected area involved	Saudi Arabia
High-risk exposure	Nil
Hospital	Yan Chai Hospital
Condition	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Negative

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with

practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed relevant symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

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## **MD announcement**

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

The Marine Department today (December 19) reminded masters, coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels navigating in Hong Kong waters to proceed at a safe speed and exercise extreme caution because restricted visibility of less than 2 nautical miles has been reported.

Appropriate sound signals shall be made when underway or at anchor. All vessels must comply with the International Regulations for Preventing Collision at Sea.

Also, when radar is used without the benefit of adequate plotting facilities, the information obtained from the equipment is rather limited and should be construed accordingly.

Visibility reports are broadcast by the Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) on VHF channels 02, 12, 14, 63 and 67.

In the event of an accident, a report shall be made immediately to the VTC at Tel: 2233 7801.