

[CE thanks Mainland's expert delegation for its visit and guidance for HKSAR to fight epidemic \(with photo\)](#)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (March 4) met with the Head of the National Health Commission's COVID-19 leading task force, Professor Liang Wannian, who arrived in Hong Kong this week and the Mainland's expert delegation led by him. Also joining the meeting were the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan; the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong; the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai; and the Chief Executive of the Hospital Authority, Dr Tony Ko.

Mrs Lam expressed her sincere gratitude to Professor Liang and the experts for their meetings, since arrival this Monday, one after another with the relevant officials of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and representatives of the Hospital Authority, the Government's anti-epidemic expert advisory group and the Advisory Panel on COVID-19 Vaccines, and the faculty of medicine under a local university. They also visited places including the residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) and a public hospital to look into the anti-epidemic work of the HKSAR on the ground.

Mrs Lam was grateful for the close exchanges that Professor Liang had with the anti-epidemic team of the HKSAR over the past few days, in which he had tendered objective and practical advice in a number of areas having regard to the Mainland's experience of effectively fighting the COVID-19 epidemic as well as to the epidemic development and actual circumstances of Hong Kong. Of these areas, in view of the tens of thousands of confirmed cases every day at present, she concurred with the experts that the current priority for the HKSAR Government was to focus resources on the patients most in need, prevent mild cases from turning severe, and reduce the number of severe cases and deaths. The Hospital Authority had been gradually converting beds in suitable hospitals in its different clusters for admitting confirmed patients. Tin Shui Wai Hospital and North Lantau Hospital were pioneers. The hospitals would transfer in-patients to other hospitals so as to focus healthcare manpower and resources on coping with the confirmed cases on the rise. Meanwhile, the Food and Health Bureau was encouraging private hospitals to assist in the treatment of non-COVID-19 patients such that the pressure on the public healthcare system could be alleviated.

At the meeting, both sides also had intensive discussion about the large number of confirmed cases and deaths involving residents of the RCHEs and residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) during the fifth wave of the epidemic. The HKSAR Government fully agreed with the delegation and was pressing ahead with arranging for those residents to be vaccinated. It was focusing efforts on mobilising more medical workers in both the public

and private sectors to form outreach medical teams to all the RCHEs and RCHDs, where to help those not yet vaccinated but were fit get their jabs, thereby strengthening protection for them and reducing their risk of serious illness and death. This outreach vaccination exercise was aimed to be completed within two weeks' time. The HKSAR Government would also, as a matter of priority, transfer infected elderly people to the community isolation and treatment facility dedicated for the residents of the RCHEs and RCHDs set up at AsiaWorld-Expo and that soon to come into operation at Kai Tak Cruise Terminal. Elderly people in stable conditions could be transferred by the Hospital Authority to the holding centres set up at sports centres to alleviate the pressure on hospitals and the RCHEs.

Mrs Lam said, "The Central Authorities have arranged for three batches of experts in total thus far to come to Hong Kong, helping the HKSAR Government examine the epidemic development in an in-depth manner under the current severe situation and strengthen its measures for 'early identification, early isolation and early treatment'. On behalf of the HKSAR Government and the Hong Kong people, I express my heartfelt gratitude to them. The ceaseless support from the country is testimony to the care of the Central Authorities and the institutional strength of 'One Country, Two Systems' and has boosted our anti-epidemic efforts. I will continue to lead the HKSAR Government to assume the primary responsibility steadfastly to stabilise the fifth wave of the epidemic early. As long as members of the public stay confident and united, we can soon overcome the epidemic."

