

CE visits community testing centres in various districts (with photos)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, visited four community testing centres in Quarry Bay, Yau Tong, Tseung Kwan O and Tuen Mun this afternoon (December 6) to learn more about their operation and the situation of members of the public undergoing tests there.

Accompanied by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, Mrs Lam visited the community testing centres at Quarry Bay Community Hall, Yau Tong Community Hall, Hang Hau Community Hall, and Siu Lun Community Hall in Tuen Mun. She was briefed by the different contractors at the centres on the workflow of the provision of virus testing services, the infection control and social distancing measures implemented inside and outside the centres as well as other operational details. She expressed gratitude to the contractors for their contributions in the fight against the virus. Mrs Lam also chatted with members of the public at the community testing centres to learn about their views on the arrangements.

There are currently nine community testing centres across the territory and five more will commence operation gradually starting this Wednesday (December 9) to further facilitate members of the public to undergo tests. In view of the changing epidemic situation, in addition to the provision of self-paid testing services for the public at a fixed price of \$240, each community testing centre also provides compulsory testing for specified groups of people in accordance with the law. Since operation started in the middle of last month, specimen from over 110 000 persons have been collected at the community testing centres and some 30 confirmed cases have been identified after verification by the Public Health Laboratory Centre.

Apart from the community testing centres, the Government has also set up mobile specimen collection stations in various districts. Members of the public may also obtain deep throat saliva specimen collection packs at 47 designated general outpatient clinics of the Hospital Authority (HA) and 121 post offices. Starting tomorrow, members of the public can obtain specimen collection packs from automatic self-service vending machines at 10 MTR stations. Specimen are required to be returned to the designated specimen collection points. In addition, various government departments are making arrangements for targeted groups to undergo free testing, including frontline staff members of departments, market stall operators and foreign domestic helpers. The Government will continue to provide more convenient testing services for the public including extending the operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations and increasing distribution and collection points of specimen packs. The target is to ensure that all specified persons will be compulsorily tested, while making testing services available as far as possible to target groups which should be tested and people who would like to be tested.

The rapid surge of the number of confirmed cases has posed great

pressure on the quarantine and treatment facilities. The Government has started to rent entire block of hotels for quarantine purpose and will commence, by phases, the operation of another 1 700 units in phase 3 of the quarantine centre at Penny's Bay. The Hospital Authority will also deploy more beds at the Community Treatment Facility at AsiaWorld-Expo. In view of the increase in the number of patients with serious conditions (including relatively younger patients) and that 31 patients were in critical conditions as at 9am today, the HA needs to allocate more intensive care facilities to cope with the demand.

"The local epidemic situation is worsening rapidly. The Government earlier announced a series of stringent measures to further enhance social distancing and reduce the flow of people in the community. Nevertheless, the co-operation of members of the public is pivotal to suppress the latest wave of epidemic. I strongly urge members of the public who are required or should undergo virus tests to complete the tests as soon as possible, with a view to achieving 'early identification, early isolation and early treatment'. For themselves and others, all citizens should stay at home as much as possible, suspend social activities, and fight the disease together," Mrs Lam said.

