

CHP announces incident concerning contamination of virus testing by contract laboratory

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced today (December 3) an incident concerning the contamination of virus testing by a contract laboratory and has apologised to 19 affected people.

The Public Health Laboratory Services Branch under the CHP was notified last night (December 2) by the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) that its laboratory, which was providing testing services on COVID-19 for the CHP, when conducting a COVID-19 test of 19 deep throat saliva samples, the reagent was suspected to have been contaminated during the handling procedure. To ensure that the testing result is accurate and as a precautionary measure, the CUHK has terminated the testing of the 19 samples immediately.

Upon receiving the notification, the CHP has contacted private doctors who conducted sample testing for the 19 people to arrange recollection of samples for the affected people as soon as possible.

The CHP stressed that the laboratory of the CUHK discovered and reported the incident promptly, the testing results had not affected patients who are confirmed or preliminary confirmed of the disease.

The CHP will continue to follow up on the incident with the CUHK and review the test workflow to prevent a reoccurrence of similar incidents in future and ensure the integrity of test results.

To enhance support for testing services on COVID-19, under the Anti-epidemic Fund, the DH collaborates with the medical schools of the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where the two medical schools are equipped with testing equipment and relevant personnel to provide testing services on COVID-19 for 12 months. The CHP will outsource some of the testing services to the two universities' laboratories.