

CS inspects preparatory work for quarantine and community treatment facilities at AsiaWorld-Expo (with video)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, today (July 23) inspected the preparatory work at AsiaWorld-Expo for setting up quarantine and community treatment facilities.

Accompanied by Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Health) Mr Fong Ngai; the Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Family and Child Welfare), Ms Pang Kit-ling; and the Director (Quality and Safety) of the Hospital Authority, Dr Chung Kin-lai, Mr Cheung called at the halls for setting up a temporary quarantine centre for residents of residential care homes for the elderly and a community treatment centre. He was briefed on the progress of the preparatory work, including inspection of the ventilation system and procurement of beds and other necessary equipment.

Mr Cheung said he was pleased to learn that the temporary quarantine centre for residents of residential care homes for the elderly will have nursing staff on duty round the clock and designated staff responsible for assisting in the daily living of the elderly. Preparation for the first hall, which will have 100 beds, is almost complete, and it can be put to use tomorrow (July 24) at the earliest. The second hall, with a capacity of about 150 to 200 beds, will be reserved for future expansion.

"The epidemic situation has been worsening in the past two weeks, with 884 confirmed cases recorded (from July 10 to 23), and with soaring numbers of local infection cases and the emergence of confirmed cases in residential care homes for the elderly.

"To get better prepared, the Government decided to set up in AsiaWorld-Expo the additional temporary quarantine centre for residents of residential care homes for the elderly and a community treatment facility to supplement existing facilities," he said.

He pointed out that there is a need to set up a designated temporary quarantine centre for residents of residential care homes for the elderly. He said it is inappropriate to arrange for those with special medical needs to be sent to general quarantine centres after being identified as close contacts of confirmed patients.

As for the community treatment facility, it will admit clinically suitable patients that fulfil the relevant criteria, so as to relieve the pressure for isolation beds in public hospitals, allowing public hospitals to concentrate on treating patients who are in a more serious condition.

He also thanked colleagues of the Food and Health Bureau, the Social Welfare Department, the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority for their efforts through day and night in the preparatory work so that the temporary quarantine centre can be put into operation in the shortest amount of time.

In addition, he said that to curb the spread of the disease, the Government has also rolled out various measures in the past days. Among them, the Government will conduct virus tests for four high-risk groups, including staff members of residential care homes for the elderly or for persons with disabilities and nursing homes, to strengthen detection in the community for identification of asymptomatic patients.

“The prolonged battle against the epidemic is undoubtedly a very difficult one that requires the public to stay at home as much as possible for a long period, wear masks indoors and outside, and maintain social distance. This is absolutely not a time to drop our guard,” Mr Cheung stressed.

He reminded Hong Kong people to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene.

He also urged the elderly to stay home as much 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.