

# [DH holds World AIDS Campaign 2024 Kick-off Ceremony to promote prevention of HIV infection and inaugural HIV Testing Month \(with photos\)](#)

The Department of Health (DH) and Hong Kong Advisory Council on AIDS (ACA) today (November 30) jointly held the World AIDS Campaign 2024 Kick-off Ceremony to raise public awareness of the prevention of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection. The DH also announced the launch of the inaugural HIV Testing Month in Hong Kong, encouraging people who have had sex to undergo HIV testing at least once to keep track of their own health status. People with HIV should seek specialist care and HIV treatment as soon as possible for viral suppression and for health restoration.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has designated December 1 (i.e. tomorrow) each year as World AIDS Day, and today's event was organised in response to this observance. Under the theme "Advances with Love, 40 Years of United Actions & Beyond", the ceremony reflected on the past and future joint efforts between the Government, healthcare sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to combat AIDS and care for patients and their families through a multipronged approach and strategic collaboration since the first case of HIV infection was reported in Hong Kong in 1984.

Officiating at the ceremony, the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, said, "The prevalence of HIV infection in Hong Kong remains well below the global average, accounting for 1 in 1 000 of the adult population. The number of new cases in recent years has continued to drop from the peak in 2015, which is encouraging. However, we must not be complacent, as the proportion of late presenters in Hong Kong has been on the rise in recent years, and the number of newly infected persons aged 50 or above has not dropped in tandem with the overall number of newly infected persons. Furthermore, various challenges such as stigma and discrimination still exist."

In view of this, the Red Ribbon Centre of the DH, in collaboration with 12 NGOs and 10 supporting organisations, is launching the inaugural HIV Testing Month in Hong Kong in December (i.e. from tomorrow onwards), with a view to increasing the public's awareness of HIV testing in Hong Kong, as well as helping the public understand how to get tested for HIV easily and conveniently through a variety of channels.

The Scientific Committee on AIDS and STI has earlier issued its recommendation that people who have had sex should get HIV testing at least once.

Dr Lam said, "The launch of HIV Testing Month aims to promote the normalisation of HIV testing. Members of the public can browse the HIV Testing Service website ([www.hivtest.gov.hk](http://www.hivtest.gov.hk)) or access the HIV testing calendar on the HIV Testing Service website via the '@DH mobile application' to learn more about and select testing resources in the community."

The Government will launch a new Announcement of Public Interest (API) under the slogan "For your health, get tested for HIV" to appeal to people who have had sex to get tested for HIV at least once, so that those who are unaware of their infection status can receive timely diagnosis and treatment. Normalising HIV testing will also help remove the negative stigma associated with HIV infection and testing.

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The ceremony was attended by around 100 stakeholders who have been involved in the fight against AIDS since the 1980s.

Designated as a United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Collaborating Centre for Technical Support, the Red Ribbon Centre of the DH has been working closely with NGOs involved in AIDS work to promote the World AIDS Campaign. It will continue to conduct publicity and education through different channels to raise public awareness of AIDS prevention.

Other officiating guests at the ceremony included the Controller of the Centre for Health Protection of the DH, Dr Edwin Tsui; the Director of the Centre for Health Systems and Policy Research of the JC School of Public Health and Primary Care of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Professor Yeoh Eng-kiong; the Chairman of the Hong Kong AIDS Foundation, Dr Leong Che-hung; the Chairperson of the ACA, Dr Ho King-man; the Chairman of the Expert Panel on HIV Infection of Health Care Workers, Dr Lai Sik-to; and the Chairman of the Scientific Committee on AIDS and STI, Dr Lee Cheuk-kwong.



