

[DH promotes AIDS care and acceptance \(with photos\)](#)

In support of World AIDS Day, the Department of Health (DH) today (November 27) held the World AIDS Campaign 2021 Kick-off Ceremony with an aim of deepening public understanding of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and its prevention, as well as appealing for care and acceptance of people living with HIV.

The World Health Organization has designated December 1 every year as the World AIDS Day to remind people around the world to stay united in fighting against the disease and to care about infected people and their family members. The theme of today's kick-off ceremony, "We are unique, yet the same", carries the message that people living with HIV are the same as others who should not be treated differently, as everyone should enjoy equality and dignity.

Officiating at the ceremony, the Under Secretary for Food and Health, Dr Chui Tak-yi, said, "HIV infection can now be treated and controlled as a chronic disease. There is, however, still a misunderstanding and stigma towards AIDS by a portion of people in society. The Government and various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been proactively promoting the elimination of discrimination by the public against people living with HIV, as well as providing practical support services to help them integrate into normal life. Despite a decrease in the number of reports of HIV infection in recent years compared to the peak in 2015, the infection situation in high-risk groups, such as young men who have sex with men, still warrants our attention." He appealed to members of the public not to lower their guard and to use condoms properly. High-risk groups should undergo regular testing.

Dr Chui added that while the COVID-19 epidemic has brought challenges in tackling AIDS, the Government and other NGOs have been working tirelessly to provide various AIDS prevention services. Through innovative strategies such as organising online workshops and launching HIV self-tests, the coverage of testing and other preventive work could be extended.

To tie in with the theme of the kick-off ceremony, seven people living with HIV have been invited to participate in the production of a documentary which features their sharing of real life experiences. It allows the public to understand more what people living with HIV have gone through and hence promotes social inclusion. Their stories will also be shared through social media posts to further raise public awareness and support for people living with HIV.

The DH's Red Ribbon Centre (RRC) will also hold a series of activities during the World AIDS Day to promote correct information of AIDS through online platforms and to disseminate the message of caring and accepting people living with HIV, injecting positive energy into the fight against AIDS.

The DH's RRC has been closely working with AIDS service NGOs to launch the World AIDS Campaign, and will continue its promotion and education through different channels to step up the public's awareness of AIDS prevention.

Other officiating guests today were the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam; the Chairperson of the Hong Kong Advisory Council on AIDS, Dr Patrick Li; the Chairman of the Council for the AIDS Trust Fund, Dr Thomas Lai; and the Chairperson of the RRC Management Advisory Committee, Mr Raphael Tong.

The public may visit the DH's Virtual AIDS Office (www.aids.gov.hk), the RRC page (www.rrc.gov.hk), the AIDS Hotline website (www.27802211.com) and the Gay Men HIV Information website (www.21171069.gov.hk) for more information on HIV/AIDS.

