

Director of Health inspects contact tracing and quarantine related work units (with photos)

The Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, accompanied by the Controller of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH), Dr Edwin Tsui, and the Principal Nursing Officer, Dr Mary Foong, today (January 9) inspected DH work units responsible for contact tracing and quarantine matters, including the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre (PBQC), Contact Tracing Office (CTO), the CHP's Quarantine Centre Task Force (QCTF) and Home Quarantine Task Force (HQTF), to understand their response plans in view of the recent surge in cases tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the latest working condition of front line staff, and ensure smooth execution of the department's anti-epidemic work and effectiveness of contact tracing so as to contain the further spread of infections.

At the PBQC, Dr Lam was briefed by front line staff on the operation of the centre and its contingency plan. As most of the recent cases had attended a number of social gatherings leading to increased transmission chains in community, the number of close contacts that needed to be quarantined at the centre increased rapidly in the past few days, putting much pressure on the manpower and capacity of quarantine facilities.

Dr Lam said, "Recently, the local epidemic situation changed drastically. Apart from a surge in imported cases, cases involving the more transmissible Omicron have been spreading locally. We must immediately intensify the various tasks relating to contact tracing and quarantine. I am most grateful to my colleagues who have all along stand firm by their posts and contribute to anti-epidemic efforts. Facing the recent threat posed by the Omicron, let us join hands with the public again to fight against the rising risk in the latest epidemic situation."

After that, Dr Lam visited the CTO at the Kai Tak Community Hall, where he was briefed by staff on the work concerning the recent tracing of a large number of close contacts relating to a number of clusters. The office has successfully assisted in the tracing of a large number of close contacts in the past week, in an attempt to end the virus transmission chain as soon as possible. The heads of the QCTF and HQTF of the CHP also reported on the coordination work in arranging compulsory quarantine for a large number of close contacts and their household contacts within a short period of time and the provision of necessary support for people under quarantine.

Dr Lam said, "The Government has tightened social distancing measures decisively aiming to promptly cut the transmission chain. I appeal to the public to continue to support and comply by the measures and rules, especially to refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or mass gathering, and to get vaccinated of COVID-19 and Influenza vaccines as soon as possible. This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the

virus from spreading in the community."

