

Distribution of specimen collection packs expands to cover outlying islands

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

To tie in with the Government's epidemic control strategy, the Hospital Authority (HA) today (September 24) announced that it will continue assisting the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health in distributing specimen packs and collecting deep throat saliva specimens at general outpatient clinics (GOPCs) during specific periods, thereby assisting individuals who feel they have a higher risk of exposure and are experiencing mild discomfort to undergo a COVID-19 test.

The HA spokesperson said that the points for distributing the specimen collection packs have been increased in phases. "Starting from next Monday (September 28), the total number of GOPCs distributing specimen collection packs will further be increased from 31 to 46 (see attachment), covering the clinics in various outlying islands for the convenience of the residents there.

"Since July 27, HA GOPCs have distributed about 54 000 specimen collection packs. Among the more than 33 000 specimens tested by the laboratory, over 60 were positive for COVID-19.

"The specimens collected by this programme are handled by an accredited local laboratory. For specimens that tested positive for COVID-19, the cases will be reported to the CHP for confirmation in accordance with the prevailing mechanism. The participants concerned will be notified by the CHP for admission to public hospitals for isolation as soon as possible. Participants should assume a negative test result if they do not receive a notification in three working days after the specimen submission."

Staff of the 46 GOPCs will distribute the specimen collection packs (with contents including a specimen collection bottle, packaging plastic bags, guidelines for collection of deep throat saliva samples, etc) between 7.30am and 8.30am from Monday to Friday (except public holidays) in the designated area outside the clinics. Only one pack will be distributed to each person while stocks last.

The HA spokesperson reminded participants that they are required to submit the deep throat saliva specimen within three working days, together with the necessary information, for laboratory tests. The collection points outside the 46 clinics will be open between 10am and 11am from Monday to Saturday (except public holidays).

The HA spokesperson also reminded the public to wear their own masks and

maintain social distancing while collecting packs or submitting the specimens.