

# Dynamic "zero infection" most effective way to fight epidemic

In response to media enquiries about whether discussions on the effectiveness of the "zero infection" target in the fight against the epidemic would violate the Hong Kong National Security Law, a spokesman for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government said today (January 30) that making general remarks and discussion is not illegal, and that dynamic "zero infection" is the most effective way to fight against the epidemic and protect public health and safety.

The spokesman said that the global situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe, and there is a continuous increase in the number of cases involving mutant Omicron strains that carry higher transmissibility. Hong Kong must cut the transmission chains as quickly as possible, with an aim of achieving dynamic "zero infection", otherwise the consequences could be dire. The Government has strengthened a series of measures to "prevent the importation of cases and the spreading of the virus in the community", with a view to protecting the lives of citizens with the greatest effectiveness.

The spokesman appealed to members of the public once again to receive vaccination under the Government's arrangements. So far, the overall vaccination rate in Hong Kong is not high. More than a million citizens yet to be vaccinated. They may be exposed to a high chance of infection, or even a risk of death.

Vaccination is highly effective in preventing severe cases or death from COVID-19, and Hong Kong is in a race against time in combating the highly transmissible mutant variants. The Government has been strongly appealing to the public to get vaccinated in order to protect the community at large by increasing the vaccination rate in Hong Kong. It is also committed to providing a variety of vaccination channels to enable the public to receive vaccination conveniently. As at January 29, the rate of those who have received the first dose of the vaccine was less than 80 per cent.

Currently, some 500 000 elderly people aged 70 or above still have not yet received their first dose of vaccine. If they unfortunately contract the virus, the chances that they will become severely ill or even die are many times higher than for those vaccinated. The Government has announced measures to encourage the elderly to receive vaccination. As for children, the Government has further extended the age eligibility of vaccination to cover those aged 5 to 11 since January 21. Parents/guardians can make reservations for children to receive vaccination at designated locations. The Government also plans to arrange transport services between schools and vaccination centres and provide an outreach vaccination service at schools.

The spokesman reiterated that the Government continues its aim to achieve dynamic "zero infection" to ensure the effective operation of the public health system, which is the most essential and effective way to

safeguard citizens' lives.