

## FHB anti-epidemic task force meeting with Mainland counterparts (with photos)

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, joined by the Department of Health (DH) and the Hospital Authority (HA), had an anti-epidemic working meeting via video conferencing today (February 24) with the First-level Inspector of the Disease Prevention and Control Bureau, National Health Commission (NHC), Mr He Qinghua; the Mainland epidemiological expert delegation and the Mainland COVID-19 medical expert delegation staying in Hong Kong as well as other Mainland officials and experts.

At the meeting, Mainland experts received briefing by the DH and the HA on the work of epidemic prevention and control and the work of treatment of patients respectively. They offered advice on strategies in tackling the fifth wave of the epidemic in Hong Kong by making reference to Mainland's valuable experience in fighting the epidemic. The Mainland expert delegations also briefed the meeting on their work during the visit. The two sides conducted in-depth discussions on epidemiological data analysis, management of testing information system, social distancing measures, vaccination and other plans in preventing and containing the epidemic. They also planned for follow-up actions.

Professor Chan said, "The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government is grateful to the First-level Inspector, Mr He Qinghua, epidemiological experts, COVID-19 medical experts and other Mainland experts of NHC for their guidance and advice offered. The HKSAR Government will follow up the recommendations by the experts, with a view to further enhancing the efficiency of epidemiological investigation and the treatment to COVID-19 patients so as to prevent mild cases from developing into severe cases."

The HKSAR Government has proactively followed up with the advice of Mainland experts. For example, as recommended by the experts, the DH officially launched an online platform for patients to report information, known as the "Communicable Disease Public Interface", yesterday (February 23). Members of the public who received notification of positive or preliminarily positive test results from laboratories can submit relevant epidemiological information and information of their household family members with an online form. The Government will accordingly arrange admission to isolation facilities for these patients and trace contacts. As of now, over 15 000 individuals have used this platform to report information.

During the meeting, Professor Chan expressed her gratitude to the Central Government again for responding promptly and actively to the requests of Hong Kong by sending the two expert delegations to the city to guide the HKSAR Government's anti-epidemic work. She also urged the DH and the HA to

actively follow up recommendations by the experts to race against time in containing the epidemic.

The epidemiological expert and COVID-19 medical expert delegations arrived in Hong Kong on February 17 and February 19 respectively.

