

Government continues to take follow-up actions on virus testing results seriously

The Government is very concerned about the recent suspected abnormality in the testing results of a private laboratory, and is continuing to take follow-up actions on the incident seriously.

The incident involved 30 specimens collected by a private laboratory on April 20. The samples were identified earlier as 29 preliminary positive cases and one "indeterminate" case. The persons concerned were subsequently admitted to hospitals for isolation and subjected to further virus and antibody testing by the Hospital Authority. Some of these persons tested negative during isolation, and they also tested negative for the COVID-19 antibody. These persons have been discharged from the hospitals accordingly. For close contacts who were put into quarantine centres in relation to the incident, they were also released gradually after testing negative, without the need to complete the 14-day quarantine period. The Government extended sincere apologies to the citizens affected.

The Government has requested the private laboratory to conduct an in-depth investigation of the incident and submit an investigation report. The Government will consider an appropriate penalty based on the investigation result and the severity of the incident in accordance with the terms and conditions of the relevant service contract, including suspension of the service contract. The Government also reserves the right of not accepting any bids by the contractor for similar government service contracts in the future. If the medical laboratory and its professional personnel are found to have violated relevant professional codes, the Government will report the case to the Medical Laboratory Technologists Board for follow-up actions.

The Public Health Laboratory Service Branch of the Department of Health noticed an abnormality in the preliminary positive results submitted by the private laboratory when reviewing the concerned specimens on April 22. The Food and Health Bureau and the Department of Health immediately followed up on the incident and arranged for Professor Yuen Kwok-yung, who is a member of the Expert Advisory Panel, and a team from the University of Hong Kong to inspect the concerned laboratory. However, for the sake of prudence, it was necessary to isolate the preliminary positive cases at that time in order to cut off any possible silent transmission chains in the community as soon as possible.