

## Government responds to media enquires

In response to media enquiries about COVID-19 tests for target groups, a Government spokesman said today (August 25) that the continued and smooth operation of Kwai Tsing Container Terminals (KTCTs) is of paramount importance to maintaining Hong Kong's logistics and cargo supplies. The Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) has been closely communicating with the terminal operators to ensure that the infection area is kept under control and that the terminal operation would not be disrupted as far as possible. As at this morning, the terminal operators have already returned over 90 per cent (more than 7 100) of the distributed bottles with specimens to the Department of Health (DH) for testing.

Last week, the THB and the DH held a meeting with the terminal operators and urged them to adopt suitable measures to reduce the risks of virus infection in KTCTs. The operators have immediately implemented a number of improvement measures, including installing additional modular units as resting areas, limiting the number of beds in each area and putting up partitions for each bed, so as to provide adequate space for social distancing among workers.

Furthermore, the THB will also provide regular virus tests for frontline employees at the terminal with higher risk (including those who need to work onboard the cargo vessels) to ensure they are fit for work, in order to maintain the smooth operation of the terminal and stable supply of goods. The THB and the Marine Department are now devising the detailed arrangement with the terminal operators. The test will be launched shortly.

Indeed, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) commissioned a testing laboratory to conduct the first round of targetted testing of the staff of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly, Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities, and Nursing Homes in mid-July 2020, with a view to early identifying of infected staff members for speedy treatment and quarantine of close contacts, hence strengthening the protection of the residents of the concerned homes. The SWD is now conducting the second round of such targetted testing. In the first round of the tests, one case was found to be COVID-19 positive; for the second round thus far three cases involving staff members of Hong Chi Lei Muk Shue Hostel were found positive and thereby reducing the risk of further spreading of the virus by early identification, quarantine and treatment. The SWD plans to conduct further rounds of targetted testing of the concerned staff in due course."