

## Government's COVID-19 testing services are not for private use

A Government spokesman said today (July 17) that the objective of the Government in providing COVID-19 testing services free-of-charge is to encourage members of the public with symptoms to take the test as early as possible. Through early detection and diagnosis of infected persons in the community, coupled with community surveillance for COVID-19, we strive to break the chain of infection as early as possible in order to safeguard public health. The COVID-19 testing services currently provided free-of-charge by the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority cover patients attending the Accident and Emergency Departments of public hospitals, General Out-patient Clinics, public hospitals and private clinics. The Government also arranged testing through private organisations for persons in high-risk and high-exposure groups.

"The Government is committed to enhancing the COVID-19 testing capacity in the public sector. Testing for around 13 000 specimens was completed yesterday (July 16) alone, and the community surveillance arrangement for high-risk and high-exposure groups has already commenced in stages. If a sample tests positive, the Government will notify the person concerned as early as possible and arrange for admission to a public hospital for treatment. If the test result is negative, no certificate of negative result will be given to the person concerned. Likewise, private organisations that carry out community surveillance will not issue certificate of negative result to the person concerned for general or specific purposes," the spokesman said.

The spokesman stressed that if members of the public need to take a COVID-19 test for personal reasons in order to obtain a relevant test result for private use, including immigration purposes, they should arrange testing services on their own. Persons who wish to enter Guangdong should arrange a COVID-19 test with testing institutions recognised by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, as listed in the Annex.

The spokesman reiterated that given the severe situation of the epidemic, members of the public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene as well as an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives. Members of the public are advised to seek medical advice promptly when feeling unwell. If suspected of being infected, they should proactively make a request to a doctor for testing with a view to achieving early identification, early isolation and early treatment.