

HA to install more vending machines for specimen collection pack distribution

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (November 19) announced that more vending machines will be installed to distribute specimen collection packs, to tie in with the "Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance Programme" of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health in order to identify infected cases earlier and minimise the risk of community transmission. Members of the public who perceive themselves to have a higher risk of exposure and experience mild discomfort can undergo COVID-19 testing with greater convenience.

"The HA has earlier piloted the use of vending machines in distributing specimen collection packs in three General Out-patient Clinics (GOPCs). With satisfactory results in the trial run, the HA decided to install another 14 vending machines in selected GOPCs in the coming week starting from tomorrow (November 20), enabling members of public to obtain specimen collection packs. The clinics can then focus manpower on providing patient services," the HA spokesman said.

In addition, to enable the public to obtain specimen collection packs with greater convenience, the HA has been exploring using vending machines in clinics that could not serve as distribution points previously due to site limitations. With due consideration, a vending machine will be installed at North Lantau Community Health Centre, adding the number of GOPCs distributing specimen collection packs to 47. Details of the collection submission times and clinics are provided in the attachment.

"The vending machines will be placed outside the usual service areas of clinics. Members of the public should observe relevant infection control measures and maintain social distancing when obtaining specimen collection packs. The public can contact clinic staff if assistance is required in the process," the spokesman said.

The HA will closely monitor the utilisation of the specimen collection pack vending machines by the public. If space and operation allow, more clinics will install vending machines in the future.