

HAD extends scope of COVID-19 Community Testing Scheme

The Home Affairs Department (HAD), together with charities and a social service organisation, will extend the scope of the COVID-19 Community Testing Scheme from tomorrow (August 7), with a view to identifying patients early and achieving the Government's strategy of "early identification, early isolation and early treatment of the infected".

The HAD and the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs) have launched the COVID-19 Community Testing Scheme in Tsz Wan Shan (Tsz Wan Shan Testing Scheme) last month. Starting from tomorrow, the COVID-19 free testing scheme will be successively extended to cover Tsz Oi Court in Wong Tai Sin District; Choi Fook Estate, Ping Shek Estate and Kai Yip Estate in Kwun Tong District; Shan King Estate and Butterfly Estate in Tuen Mun District; as well as Chong Tak Building and Chung Yuen Building in Yau Tsim Mong District, involving a total of 46 buildings and about 86 000 residents.

A spokesperson for the HAD said, "In view of the severity of the epidemic, the HAD will extend the scope of the testing scheme and conduct COVID-19 tests for households of some private residential buildings with confirmed cases as well as households of buildings in public housing estates. We hope to help the Centre for Health Protection identify the invisible transmission chain at an early stage. The HAD will co-operate with the TWGHs, Yan Oi Tong and Mong Kok Kai Fong Association Limited Chan Hing Social Service Centre to launch the scheme in the four districts successively starting from tomorrow."

Members of the HAD and the TWGHs will first distribute throat-swab sampling kits and registration forms at Oi Yin House, Oi Ning House, Oi Yan House, Oi Wai House and Oi Yue House of Tsz Oi Court in Wong Tai Sin District tomorrow, and plan to collect the samples on the following day (August 8) for testing. The department will then work with the three charities and the social service organisation respectively to distribute in the four areas specimen bottles and registration forms to the residents. After the collection of registration forms and specimen bottles from the residents, the charities and the social service organisation will pass the specimens to the testing agency, Sunrise Diagnostic Centre Limited, for testing.

As a number of buildings are involved, the scheme has to be carried out in phases in an orderly manner. The management offices of relevant estates or buildings will duly inform the residents of the testing scheme schedule. Priority for testing will be accorded to residents of buildings with confirmed cases. Residents of other buildings in the estate should wait for the collection of specimen bottles and registration forms until testing is arranged for the building they reside in.

The distribution of specimen bottles and the collection of samples for the Tsz Wan Shan Testing Scheme were finished on August 4 and August 5

respectively. The scheme covered 22 buildings in Tsz Ching Estate, Tsz Lok Estate, Tsz Man Estate and Tsz Hong Estate in Tsz Wan Shan; as well as Choi Fai Estate in Ngau Chi Wan. With the active participation and co-operation of the residents, about 34 000 specimen bottles have been distributed and more than 29 000 specimens have been collected for testing. Around 85 per cent of residents returned the specimen bottles on time and nearly 80 per cent of household members of the buildings participated in this scheme.

The testing agency has completed testing on a majority of the specimens returned. Samples that tested positive have been sent to the Public Health Laboratory Centre of the Department of Health for review. So far, 14 cases were determined to have a positive test result.

The HAD expresses gratitude to Lok Sin Tong and the TWGHs for their assistance in distributing food packs to elderly in need living in Kowloon East. As of August 4, the HAD has provided food packs to over 18 000 elderly singletons and doubleton households.