

## HKSAR Government welcomes support team of Central Government to help with anti-epidemic work of HKSAR (with video)

A spokesman for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (August 2) expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Central Government for its proactive response to the request of the HKSAR Government made in the face of the severe epidemic in Hong Kong and the speedy formation of a Mainland nucleic acid test support team to support the anti-epidemic work of the HKSAR.

The support team was co-ordinated by the Central Government and formed by the National Health Commission. Seven of the members arrived in Hong Kong today and will start work tomorrow (August 3) to assist with the preparation for a temporary laboratory with a view to raising considerably the virus testing capability of the HKSAR to meet the need of the Government to extend the coverage of community testing. To strengthen collaboration, the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, gave clear instructions on how to launch large-scale virus testing in the internal anti-epidemic steering committee meeting held in the afternoon yesterday (August 1).

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, and the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai today, represented the HKSAR Government to welcome the seven members of the Mainland nucleic acid test support team. They both expressed gratitude to the Central Government for its proactive response to the request of the HKSAR Government and the speedy formation of the support team to support the anti-epidemic work of the HKSAR. The relevant departments of the HKSAR will work closely with members of the support team to formulate a concrete work plan as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, the HKSAR Government also noticed that certain individuals are spreading rumours intentionally on the Internet, claiming the Government will transport the DNA data of the public to the Mainland during virus testing, the HKSAR Government solemnly clarified that this is absolutely unfounded, emphasising that all anti-epidemic work done by the Government completely complied with the requirements of the law. The Central Government's support aims at enhancing the virus testing capacity. All virus testing will only be conducted in Hong Kong, samples of which will not be transported to the Mainland for testing. Regarding some people deliberately spreading false rumours, attacking the anti-epidemic work of the Government, the Government condemned such acts. As to whether spreading untrue claims intentionally by certain individuals would constitute criminal offence, the relevant Government departments will study the matter carefully and collect evidences for follow-up.

Given the severe epidemic situation in Hong Kong, the HKSAR Government sought the assistance of the Central Government earlier, primarily in the areas of enhancing virus testing capacity and establishing makeshift treatment facilities, and received staunch support by the Central Government. Representatives of the relevant departments of the Mainland and relevant officials of the HKSAR met earlier and set up a working group to take charge of the implementation work. In addition to the above-mentioned support team, the HKSAR Government is pleased to learn that the National Health Commission has formed another support team to assist the HKSAR Government to establish a makeshift community treatment facility at AsiaWorld-Expo similar to the "mobile cabin hospital". The HKSAR Government expressed the hope that with the support of the Central Government, the whole community will fight the virus together to curb the increasingly severe epidemic as soon as possible.