

Hospital Authority activates six more designated clinics

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

To strengthen community support for confirmed patients and implement a triage system to prioritise services for patients in critical condition, the Hospital Authority (HA) announced today (March 14) that it will activate six more designated clinics for confirmed cases of COVID-19 tomorrow (March 15) to help provide diagnosis and treatment for confirmed patients in the community presenting with relatively mild symptoms of infection (e.g., fever, cough, sore throat), especially high risk patients (including the elderly aged 70 or above, children aged 5 or below, women at 28 or more weeks of pregnancy, and immunocompromised patients such as organ transplant recipients and those with immune system disorders or long-term use of immunosuppressive drugs) requiring medical advice and treatment to soothe their symptoms.

"The HA had activated 17 designated clinics earlier for confirmed cases of COVID-19. As at 5pm on March 13, the designated clinics have provided over 47 000 attendees. The six newly activated designated clinics are Wan Tsui General Out-patient Clinic, Wang Tau Hom Jockey Club General Out-patient Clinic, Lam Tin Polyclinic General Out-patient Clinic, Shek Kip Mei General Out-patient Clinic, Tsing Yi Town General Out-patient Clinic and Madam Yung Fung Shee Health Centre, adding up a total of 23 designated clinics," the HA spokesperson said.

The designated clinics are open from Monday to Sunday, including public holidays, from 9am to 1pm, and 2pm to 5pm. In order to implement appropriate infection control arrangements, people seeking consultation must make appointments to avoid people queuing at the clinics. To enhance support to confirmed patients in the community, especially high risk patients to reduce the risk of deterioration of clinical conditions, 23 designated clinics of the HA will launch the "Care Booking Line" tomorrow (March 15), providing designated telephone booking lines to the abovementioned high risk patients for making medical appointments in addition to the existing telephone booking service. Moreover, the nursing team from the Patient Support Call Centre will refer high risk patients to designated clinics for medical consultation, subject to their condition and needs. Other eligible patients can still arrange an appointment for the designated clinics that they have chosen via telephone booking. Clinic staff will arrange the earliest appointment on the same day or the next day. Telephone numbers of appointment bookings at designated clinics and the numbers of the "Care Booking Line" for high risk patients are listed in Annex 1.

Normal general out-patient services at the designated clinics will be suspended starting from tomorrow. In addition, in order to focus manpower and resources to support the services of the designated clinics, other general out-patient clinics (GOPCs) will also temporarily suspend services from tomorrow onwards. Episodic patients who, having an appointment made at the

abovementioned clinics via telephone booking or the mobile application "HA Go", are advised to seek consultation at other GOPCs in the district or at private clinics. Chronic patients with follow-up appointments at the clinics are advised to refill their drugs at the designated Medication Refill Clinic in the district on the appointment day by presenting their appointment slips and identity cards. For the list of Designated Clinics for COVID-19 Confirmed Cases and the corresponding Medication Refill Clinics, see Annex 2; for GOPCs with temporary services suspension and the corresponding Medication Refill Clinics, see Annex 3. As for other GOPCs of the HA, special arrangements of medication refills will be arranged for those patients with chronic illnesses and have scheduled follow-up appointments at GOPCs in view of the situation of COVID-19. Patients in stable condition may visit the clinic on the original appointment date with the patient's appointment slip and Hong Kong identity card for medication refill arrangements.

Vaccination services (including COVID-19, seasonal influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations) originally provided at the concerned designated clinics will also be suspended. The Government will send text messages to citizens who have made appointments for COVID-19 vaccination at the related designated clinics and advise them to go to other community vaccination centres for vaccination service.

The distribution of deep throat saliva specimen collection packs and collection service of specimens at the related designated clinics will also be suspended. Citizens are advised to go to other selected GOPCs or service points designated by the Government for obtaining specimen collection packs and submitting the specimens. Details on the specimen collection pack distribution points and specimen collection points are available at the following website: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html.

The HA will closely monitor the service needs and operation of the designated clinics to dovetail with the latest development of the epidemic. The HA once again thanks the public for their patience and for being accommodating in complying with the arrangements so that the isolation facilities in public hospitals can accord priority to the elderly, young, and patients with special medical needs. With the gradual increase in community treatment and isolation facilities, the remaining confirmed patients will be admitted in an orderly manner.