

Hospital Authority announces two incidents of interruptions of the negative pressure system in isolation wards

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesman for Hospital Authority (HA) made the following announcement today (June 15) concerning two incidents of interruptions of the negative pressure system in isolation wards:

At 11.03am today, there was a power interruption at Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital. The safety device of the power supply system terminated power supply. Ventilation system was interrupted owing to the suspension of power supply triggered the alarm of the negative pressure system of isolation wards because of pressure change. The system resumed normal at 11.35am after checking by on-site staff of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD). It was later reported that the ventilation system was suspended again due to tripping of power supply at 2.25pm, affecting the negative pressure setting in one of the isolation wards. There were five inpatients staying in the concerned ward, including a confirmed COVID-19 patient who was admitted to a single isolation room. As a precautionary measure, the hospital has arranged patients transfer from the concerned ward to other isolation wards. The concerned isolation ward has also been closed for a thorough checkup and repair.

During the incident, no healthcare worker was inside the isolation room and no high-risk procedure was performed. All healthcare staff working outside the cubicle were equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment. The infection risk has been assessed to be very low.

In addition, at 10.57 am today, while technicians of the EMSD were carrying out repair work at the nurse station on the 11th floor of Infectious Disease Centre of the Princess Margaret Hospital, the electricity supply of some of the rooms were interrupted. It is suspected that the auto swing doors between the isolation room and anteroom did not completely close and hence the negative pressure system in two of the rooms were affected. On the other hand, the auto swing doors between the anteroom and corridor did not open and the negative pressure has remained normal. On-site technicians from the EMSD were immediately informed and restored the system. The electric power and the negative pressure system resumed normal operation at 11.10 am. Ventillation system was functioning properly during the incident.

All staff in the concerned floor were asked to wear N95 respirators right after the hospital noticed the interruption of the negative pressure system. 15 patients were hospitalised on the concerned floor. Five patients

were COVID-19 confirmed cases and one of the them were in the concerned rooms. During the incident, no personnel has entered or left the rooms nor has any high risk procedure been performed. All patients and all ward staff have worn surgical masks and N95 respirators respectively. According to the hospital's assessment, the risk of infection would be extremely low.

The two hospitals are highly concerned about the incidents and have reported the cases to the Hospital Authority Head Office via the Advance Incident Reporting System. Both hospitals have urged the EMSD to conduct an investigation to prevent similar incidents from happening again.