

# Hospital Authority Supports Universal Community Testing Programme

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) spokesperson remarked today (August 31) that the HA supports the Government's Universal Community Testing Programme. The programme dovetails with the epidemic control policy of "early identification, early isolation and early treatment". The programme will help identify and eliminate the invisible transmission link in the community. By managing the epidemic, pressure of public hospitals can be alleviated and normal operation can be resumed as soon as possible.

In the Administrative and Operational Meeting held last Thursday (August 27), the HA Board noted and supported HA's measures in assisting the preparation of the Government's Universal Community Testing Programme. The HA has provided the equipment and manpower to conduct fit tests of surgical respirators for the programme staff and expedited the approval of HA healthcare staff in participating the specimen collection work in test centres.

The HA also encourages its staff to join the testing. Public hospitals will get prepared in terms of manpower and facilities in light of possible increase in confirmed patients. The HA spokesperson said that large scale community testing will also reduce staff and inpatient infection risks.

"With a few public hospitals having nosocomial infections due to occult patients, the HA agreed that large scale community testing programme together with various ongoing screening arrangements for high risk groups can reduce the infection risks of frontline staff and other patients in the hospitals."

"Since late July, the HA has arranged distribution of specimen packs for individuals who perceive themselves to have higher risk of exposure and experience mild discomfort, under the 'Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance Programme' of the Department of Health. By far, over 40 000 people have collected the specimen packs and 62 have been tested positive for COVID-19, preventing further transmission in the community by these people," the spokesperson said.

"The Board Members agreed that Hong Kong has to control the epidemic as soon as possible to alleviate the pressure of public hospitals, so as to resume normal operation and provide the necessary healthcare services for the community," the spokesperson added.