

Medical and healthcare sectors respond positively to UCTP

To identify as early as possible asymptomatic COVID-19 patients in the community, the Government will launch the Universal Community Testing Programme (UCTP) on September 1, under which trained medical or healthcare personnel will collect specimens from members of the public. A spokesman for the Government said today (August 25) that the medical and healthcare sectors respond positively to the programme, with so far more than 5 000 personnel from the sectors enrolling to participate in the UCTP. The spokesman expressed gratitude to the medical and healthcare sectors for their support to the programme.

The spokesman said that the Civil Service Bureau and the Food and Health Bureau had a meeting with the medical and healthcare sectors this evening. During the meeting, the Government gave a detailed account of the arrangements in respect of manpower deployment, fit test of respirators, specimen collection and other training for personnel of the medical and healthcare sectors participating in the UCTP.

The UCTP will be launched on September 1 and is scheduled to run for seven days. Subject to the progress, it may be extended for no more than seven days. The Government will set up community testing centres in all districts across the territory. To ensure the health and safety of the public participating in the programme and personnel manning the testing centres, all the venues selected by the Government for use as community testing centres have been assessed and considered suitable by the Department of Health and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department. Various infection control measures will also be put in place at the centres in accordance with the recommendations of the Department of Health. There will also be an adequate supply of protective equipment to personnel manning the testing centres, including suitable respirators (or equivalent), eye protection, gowns, gloves etc.

The community testing centres will operate from 8am to 8pm and time will be reserved for cleaning and disinfection. Members of the public are required to make an appointment online by providing their personal particulars and choosing the testing location and time slot. Booking arrangements and other details will be announced in due course.

Specimens will be collected by trained medical or healthcare personnel. They will collect the combined nasal and throat swabs of members of the public for laboratory testing. People whose test results are negative will be informed by SMS through their mobile phones. If a test result is positive, the Department of Health will take follow-up action immediately.

Laboratory testing and surveillance are important elements in the Government's anti-epidemic work. The spokesman appealed to members of the

public to fight the virus together and join the UCTP for the sake of their health and that of their families.