

Mobile specimen collection stations and community testing centres provide free testing for persons subject to compulsory testing

With the prolonged local COVID-19 epidemic situation, there has been a widespread number of confirmed cases across all districts. Some of the confirmed cases have been asymptomatic which indicates the existence of many silent transmission chains within the community. The Government has exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to cover a number of buildings across the territory under compulsory testing notices and require residents, workers and visitors to undergo testing. To facilitate persons covered under the compulsory testing notices to undergo testing, the Government has arranged for testing service providers to set up mobile specimen collection stations at a number of locations in various districts to provide free and convenient testing services for them.

The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations already in operation in various districts providing free COVID-19 nucleic acid testing services for the general public are at the Annex. A new mobile specimen collection station will be set up in Princess Margaret Hospital to provide free testing services for the workers, visitors and patients of the hospital. The Government has taken into account the testing service needs of individual buildings covered under compulsory testing notices and the existing testing services near the buildings in the course of setting up mobile specimen collection stations.

The Government will decide whether it is necessary to increase the number of stations, adjust or extend the operation periods of the stations after reviewing their usage and the public's demand for the testing service.

Apart from mobile specimen collection stations, persons subject to compulsory testing can also choose to attend any of the community testing centres in all districts to receive testing free of charge. Separately, as there have been several COVID-19 confirmed cases in Kat Hing Wai, Kam Tin Heung, Yuen Long recently, the Community Testing Centre in Yuen Long Town East Community Hall extends free testing service to residents of Kat Hing Wai from today (January 5) until January 7 (Thursday) tentatively. The operating hours of the centres are from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm daily. The centres provide booking as well as on-site registration services. Members of the public are only required to input simple personal information, and select the testing centre and time slot in the 24-hour appointment booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk). The centres accord priority to those who make bookings in advance.

A Government spokesman said, "The testing service providers will provide specimen collection services by combined nasal and throat swabs at the mobile specimen collection stations and community testing centres for testing free of charge. Generally speaking, mobile specimen collection stations only provide testing services for local residents and workers who are subject to compulsory testing."

People whose test results are negative will be informed by SMS notifications through their mobile phones. Persons subject to compulsory testing must properly keep the relevant records. If any specimen tested shows a preliminarily positive result, the specimen will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Department of Health (DH) for a confirmatory test. Confirmed cases will be followed up and announced by the Centre for Health Protection of the DH.

The Government reminds the public that they can undergo COVID-19 testing for free through various means. For details on other free-of-charge testing means other than mobile specimen collection stations and community testing centres, please refer to the following webpage: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html. If a person has symptoms, he or she should seek medical attention immediately and should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or community testing centres.

The spokesman urged all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with exposure to infection risk (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or contacted confirmed cases) to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons.