

Nineteen community testing centres across territory in full operation

To further facilitate members of the public to undergo COVID-19 testing, the Government will set up an additional community testing centre at Ngau Tau Kok Road Sports Centre which will commence service on December 23 (Wednesday). There will be a total of 19 community testing centres across the territory providing relevant testing services for the public, and the total daily testing volume will exceed 20 000 tests.

The community testing centres provide self-paid testing services for the public at a more affordable price to serve general community or private purposes such as certification for travelling or work. The price of testing services is capped at \$240. The Government would also, as and when necessary (such as in situations with higher risks of community transmission), conduct testing for target groups, specified persons or other members of the public at the testing centres for public health reasons on a needs basis, and separate announcements will be made at that time. The additional testing centre will operate for an initial period of three months, which may be extended for another three months depending on the situation.

Since their opening on November 15, as at December 19, community testing centres in various districts had provided testing services for more than 308 000 persons, of which 514 samples tested preliminarily positive (0.17 per cent) and had been referred to the Centre for Health Protection for confirmatory tests and follow-up.

A Government spokesman said, "The local epidemic situation is worsening rapidly. In order to identify cases in the community as early as possible to help cut the transmission chains, specified persons of high risk are required to undergo compulsory testing on a mandatory basis, targeted groups are arranged to undergo testing on an obligatory basis, and we also encourage members of the public to undergo testing on a voluntary basis. Community testing centres provide services not only for those who undergo testing voluntarily at a more affordable price, but also for persons who are subject to compulsory testing and targeted groups, thus enabling the Government to meet unexpected testing demand in a more efficient and flexible manner with a view to strengthening disease prevention and control in Hong Kong."

The community testing centres would provide specimen collection services (using combined nasal and throat swabs) and COVID-19 testing services for all asymptomatic individuals holding valid Hong Kong identity cards, Hong Kong birth certificates or other valid identity documents (including Hong Kong residents and non-Hong Kong residents). The centres are open daily from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm. Deep cleaning and disinfection would be conducted when they close in the afternoon and at night.

Booking and walk-in services are available. Members of the public only need to provide simple personal information (including their name, number of

valid identity document and phone number) on the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk) to select the testing centre and time slot. The testing centres would accord priority to provide service for individuals with advance bookings. Members of the public may also call the testing centres for enquiries on the availability of bookings and walk-in quotas before visiting the centres.

The Government spokesman said, "To reduce the risk of virus transmission, testing agencies provide various means of contactless payment. The Government encourages members of the public using self-paid service to reduce or avoid using cash as a means of payment as far as possible."

Currently, the locations, hotlines and means of contactless payment of community testing centres providing services for the general public in various districts are at the Annex.

Participants, upon receiving self-paid testing service, with a negative result will receive a test report for a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within 24 hours. Those who test positive as confirmed by the Department of Health (DH) will receive calls from the DH to arrange for isolation and treatment in public hospitals in accordance with established procedures.

The Government reminds the public that they can undergo COVID-19 testing through various means. For details on other testing means than 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 community testing centres.