Princess Margaret Hospital announces a cluster of COVID-19 positive cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesman for the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) made an announcement today (January 4) regarding a cluster of COVID-19 positive cases:

A 66-year-old female patient with multiple myeloma was admitted to the Medical Day Ward in PMH for bisphosphonate infusion at around 11.30am on December 28,2020. The patient presented with fever but had no upper respiratory tract infection symptoms. A designated cohorting area was arranged for her in the Medical Day Ward. The patient was all along masked except meal time and was discharged at around 4.30 pm after the infusion therapy of the day was done.

On January 1, the patient was classified as a close contact as her family member was confirmed positive to COVID-19 and the patient presented with shortness of breath. She was admitted to PMH for isolation and treatment. The hospital subsequently arranged COVID-19 test for her and the test result was preliminarily positive. The patient's condition deteriorated subsequently and required high-flow oxygen to maintain breathing. She is currently treated in the Intensive Care Unit with critical condition.

The hospital's infection control team conducted contact tracing for the Medical Day Ward. The team found that 55 patients and 27 staff members had stayed in the Medical Day Ward in the same period on December 28, 2020. The hospital immediately arranged COVID-19 tests for them. Two patients (one male and one female, aged 35 and 60) and two staff members (one doctor and one nurse) were tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19. All of them are under isolation for treatment in the hospital. Besides, 23 patients, 8 staff members and two people who accompanied the patient for consultation are also classified as close contacts and are required quarantine for 14 days.

Having conducted further contact tracing for the two staff, seven more staff members are classified as close contacts and are required quarantine for 14 days. The contact tracing is still underway.

A team of experts including Professor Yuen Kwok-yung, Chair Professor of the Department of Microbiology, University of Hong Kong and Dr Raymond Lai, Hospital Authority Chief Infection Control Officer had paid a visit to the Medical Day Ward in PMH this afternoon. After Professor Yuen reviewed patients and staff cases, the workflow of the ward and hospital's infection control measures, he suggested that all those who are going to attend the Day Ward should take the COVID-19 test 72 Hours before the consultation. He also suggested that if the patient presents with fever, he / she should be admitted to the surveillance ward or isolation ward. Besides, Professor Yuen

also suggested that the hospital should shorten the meal time of patients as far as possible, such as providing light meals instead, in order to shorten the unmask duration of patients.

The hospital immediately enhanced the infection control of respective caring procedures in view of the experts' advice. The hospital will carefully examine the recommendations of the experts and to introduce other improvement measures. The operation of the Medical Day Ward has been suspended for thorough cleansing and sanitisation with immediate effect. PMH will continue to closely monitor the health of our staff and patients and communicate with the Centre for Health Protection about the latest situation.