

Progressive arrival of anti-epidemic medical supplies from Mainland to Hong Kong

The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) said today (April 2) that the task force of ensuring medical supplies has been proactively co-ordinating with various government departments and units participating in the anti-epidemic work. The task force is working closely with its Mainland counterparts to ensure that resources can be expeditiously supplied to Hong Kong to cope with the epidemic.

With the full support from the Central People's Government, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has procured large quantities of medical supplies, including rapid antigen test (RAT) kits, proprietary Chinese medicines and personal protective equipment, which are arriving in Hong Kong in batches to cater for the various anti-epidemic work of frontline personnel. The supplies have also been distributed to underprivileged groups, confirmed patients and people in need through multiple channels including relevant government departments, the Hong Kong Community Anti-Coronavirus Link (the Link) and other local organisations. The Central People's Government is also co-ordinating with Mainland enterprises to provide timely and sufficient supplies to the Hong Kong retail market, and ensure various anti-epidemic products are of good quality and at a reasonable price for the public to purchase. The CEDB found that RAT kits and proprietary Chinese medicines are in surging demand recently, and are adequately available with a decrease in retail price. This could directly relieve the economic burden of the public.

To meet the imminent needs of fighting the epidemic, these medical supplies including RAT kits, anti-epidemic proprietary Chinese medicines, paracetamol, thermometers, pulse oximeters and masks, which have been procured with the co-ordination by the Central People's Government, are contained in tens of thousands of anti-epidemic kits distributed daily to confirmed patients so that people with urgent need would be able to receive the supplies. Given the abundant anti-epidemic medical supplies from the Mainland, the Government has started to progressively distribute the medical supplies, including RAT kits, high-grade protective masks and anti-epidemic proprietary Chinese medicines, to households in Hong Kong via anti-epidemic service bags today under the co-ordination of the Home Affairs Department (HAD), with a view to enhancing their anti-epidemic awareness.

So far over 230 million RAT kits procured with the co-ordination by the Central People's Government have been received. Various kinds of disinfectant products and personal protective equipment have also arrived in Hong Kong, including over 360 million N95 masks, KN95 masks and surgical masks, as well as over 50 million articles of other protective equipment such as protective coveralls, protective gowns, goggles, face shields, shoe covers and

surgical/examination gloves.

Apart from being continuously distributed to the frontline anti-epidemic personnel of the Department of Health and other government departments, these medical supplies have also been provided to volunteers, persons with higher infection risks (such as residents subject to "restriction-testing declarations" or living in areas testing positive under sewage tracing), and people working in high-risk industries (such as cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers, property management staff, cleaning staff and staff of residential care homes for the elderly), as well as confirmed patients undergoing home isolation or their close contacts under home quarantine via anti-epidemic kits.

The HKSAR Government expressed gratitude to the Central People's Government for its donation of 600 000 boxes of anti-epidemic proprietary Chinese medicines. Most of them have been distributed to residents subject to "restriction-testing declarations" through the Food and Health Bureau, and to confirmed patients in isolation facilities and those receiving treatment at 18 Chinese medicine clinics through the Hospital Authority (HA). Among those received, 170 000 boxes have been allocated to the HAD for distribution to the community through the Link and other organisations for use by people in need. Some of the anti-epidemic proprietary Chinese medicines, procured by the HKSAR Government with the assistance rendered by the Central People's Government, are distributed progressively to households in Hong Kong via anti-epidemic service bags.

Also, medicines containing paracetamol for use as analgesics and antipyretics, procured by the task force, are arriving in Hong Kong progressively. They are being allocated to the HA for patient use continuously. Some will be distributed to confirmed patients undergoing home isolation via anti-epidemic kits.

More than 1.6 million pulse oximeters have been received by the task force so far. Apart from those distributed to confirmed patients via anti-epidemic kits as mentioned above, most of the pulse oximeters have been distributed to the HA for patient use.

The majority of anti-epidemic medical supplies from the Mainland have arrived in Hong Kong progressively. Apart from those anti-epidemic medical supplies distributed through the aforementioned channels, the rest are centrally managed and stored by the Government Logistics Department for the use and regular withdrawal by relevant departments to meet their demands in the coming months. The CEDB will provide the public with information about the supply of medical supplies through press releases in due course. The task force will also continue to review the situation and timely adjust the procurement of medical supplies according to the Government's anti-epidemic policies and measures.