

Public hospital daily update on Wuhan-related cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (January 31), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health (DH) the admission of 86 patients (40 male and 46 female, aged 12 months to 90) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of severe respiratory disease associated with a novel infectious agent. Specimens of the patients concerned have been sent to the DH for testing. There are still 138 patients under isolation.

In response to the confirmed case of novel coronavirus with unidentified source of infection, the Hospital Authority (HA) today convened an ad hoc meeting of the Central Committee on Infectious Diseases and Emergency Responses to conduct risk assessment of the situation and discuss the need to strengthen infection control measures.

The patient concerned attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Princess Margaret Hospital on January 24 and was admitted to the hospital for treatment. The HA has implemented the "Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance" scheme since January 13 to conduct tests on novel coronavirus for pneumonia patients meeting the relevant criteria. As the clinical condition of the patient's pneumonia had not improved after receiving three days of treatment, the hospital conducted the test accordingly.

Upon the confirmatory diagnosis of the patient, the hospital supported the Centre for Health Protection to carry out related follow-up and confirmed that healthcare staff concerned had been wearing appropriate personal protective equipment, and no staff member was listed as close contacts and required quarantine.

As a precautionary measure, the hospital has conducted novel coronavirus for a healthcare worker with respiratory symptoms and the result is negative. The hospital will continue to closely monitor the staff and patients involved.

The HA will also further extend the coverage of the "Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance" scheme to all pneumonia inpatients, and strengthen infection control and isolation arrangements to tie in with the extended coverage.

1. In addition to the existing isolation wards, public hospitals will set up "Surveillance Wards".
2. All inpatients with pneumonia are required to stay in the isolation wards or "Surveillance Wards" until the test results for novel coronavirus are available.
3. Laboratories in the seven hospital clusters have secured the rapid test reagents, which can avail the novel coronavirus test results within

hours.

4. All healthcare staff in the isolation wards and the "Surveillance Wards" are required to wear a full set of personal protective equipment to enter the ward to take care of the patients.

The related measures can reduce the risk of the novel coronavirus pneumonia patients in general wards, and can effectively prevent the spread of the virus.

The HA will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.