

# Public hospitals heighten alertness on dengue fever

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

In view of the latest confirmed local cases of dengue fever, the Hospital Authority (HA) Central Committee on Infectious Disease and Emergency Responses this morning (August 15) convened an ad hoc meeting, which was joined by representatives from the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health, to discuss the risk assessment and preparedness of public hospitals for the disease.

"According to our risk assessment of the current situation, in view of the unusual situation of confirmation of four local cases within a short period and also because the possibility of new local cases cannot be ruled out, the HA has to maintain high vigilance and get prepared for the contingency response. Front-line healthcare staff will be reminded to identify patients early for timely diagnosis and treatment," the HA spokesperson said.

At the meeting today it was agreed to implement the following enhanced measures to be prepared for the possible risk of an outbreak in Hong Kong:

- To activate the "e-Dengue" enhanced surveillance system tomorrow (August 16) to promptly review suspected cases and report them to the CHP for necessary follow-up;
- To strengthen co-operation with the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the CHP on rapid testing of dengue fever to facilitate clinical diagnosis; and
- To step up mosquito control measures in public hospitals and clinics as well as their construction sites to eliminate every possible mosquito breeding site.

The meeting today also confirmed to strengthen internal communication on the latest situation and enhanced measures to enable the front-line units of public hospitals to get well prepared for the contingency response measures for an outbreak of dengue fever.

The spokesperson also appealed to members of the public who are residing in the vicinity of the four confirmed local cases and other travellers returning from affected areas to inform healthcare staff while seeking medical consultation at public hospitals and clinics. Furthermore, the public are also reminded to take measures on mosquito control including wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and applying insect repellent containing DEET to clothing or uncovered areas of the body, and scrubbing and cleaning drains and surface channels with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any deposited mosquito eggs.

The HA will continue to closely collaborate with the CHP to monitor the situation of dengue fever infection in Hong Kong and to keep the general public and professionals updated on the situation and relevant information.