

Queen Elizabeth Hospital converted to designated hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) announced that Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) in Kowloon Central Cluster (KCC) will be converted to designated hospital for COVID-19 patients from today (March 9) onwards. The hospital will utilise around 1 500 beds in Main Blocks to admit severe COVID-19 patients. The contingency measure can help concentrate manpower and resources to manage patients upon the severe epidemic situation.

Non-COVID-19 patients staying in the wards located at Main Blocks would be transferred to other hospitals in phases according to their clinical conditions, amid suitable patients would be transferred to private hospitals, so as to vacate the beds for admitting COVID-19 patients. Individual patients who are unfit for transfer would stay in QEH for treatment. The hospital has set up a central command centre to monitor the patient transfer process.

The Accident and Emergency Departments (AEDs) of QEH and Kwong Wah Hospital in KCC will only admit life threatening and pregnant lady ambulance cases from today to Saturday (March 12), for arranging the admission of the confirmed COVID-19 patients currently awaiting in the two AEDs. From Sunday (March 13) onwards, QEH's AED will only admit confirmed COVID-19 patients and emergency cases in its cluster, while ambulances will send other patients to the AED of Kwong Wah Hospital directly.

The Cluster Chief Executive of Kowloon Central, Dr Eric Cheung said, "the two AEDs in KCC have been facing immense pressure over the past two weeks. Unprecedented pressure resulted from the influx of COVID-19 patients has far beyond our capacity and imposed heavy burden to frontline healthcare workers. Meanwhile, the situation in other hospitals within the cluster is also stringent. Converting QEH to designated hospital could prioritise resources and manpower to manage the severe patients, in particular the elderly patients with poor clinical condition to reduce their risk of mortality, amid to alleviate the pressure of frontline healthcare workers."

Some appointments for elective surgeries, allied health, radiology and hemodialysis services will be rescheduled, or will be arranged to continue their treatment in other hospitals or via telecare. Patients affected will be notified by staff members as early as practicable. Individual blocks and departments in the hospital will maintain services, including the Jockey Club Institute of Radiotherapy and Oncology, Specialist Out-patient Clinics in Ambulatory Care Centre and etc.

The hospital would strengthen infection control measures and ventilation in wards in accordance with established infection control guideline. The infection control team would visit the wards and advise healthcare workers on

infection control knowledge. The hospital has sufficient stockpile of personal protective equipment, and accommodation in hotels nearby the hospital have been reserved for staff in need.

The HA expressed apology to the patients affected, appealed to patients and members of the public for understanding, and thanked for their co-operation. The HA will closely monitor the demand of healthcare services in the community and the operation of QEH to provide appropriate medical support to the residents in Kowloon Central.