

SCS on Universal Community Testing Programme

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, on the Universal Community Testing Programme at a media session after attending a television programme (September 13):

Reporter: Would the scheme be rolled out again...(inaudible) in the fourth wave? And regarding the cost of this time, how much money is paid to Beijing, the Central Government...(inaudible)?

Secretary for the Civil Service: This is a one-off universal community testing programme to help us understand the infection situation in the community and also to identify and isolate those infected, especially those asymptomatic cases, so as to help us end the current epidemic. In future, with the enhanced and increased testing capacity, I am sure that we will focus on target group testing or do rapid and large-scale testing when there are cluster outbreaks. That would be the strategy and approach. Of course, the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority will continue to do their epidemiological testing as they have been doing all along. Actually, since the beginning of this epidemic, more than one million testing had been conducted by the Hospital Authority and the Department of Health.

As regards to the cost of the Universal Community Testing Programme, the Central People's Government provides us with the setting up of the lab, and the personnel that do the testing. That cost would be borne by the Central People's Government. The Hong Kong SAR Government basically would be responsible for the cost incurred in the setting up of the community testing centres, the honorarium paid to the healthcare staff and also the administrative support staff, the cost incurred in logistics, in supplies, in security, in cleansing and all that. As the scheme is still on going, we would report on the cost of this programme after the programme is finished.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)