

## SFH mobilises medical and health sector to support various anti-epidemic measures (with photo)

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, had a meeting with over 60 representatives of the medical and health sector from various healthcare professional bodies, medical and nursing schools of tertiary institutions, medical organisations, healthcare institutions and non-governmental organisations (see annex for the attendance list) via video conferencing today (March 9) to enlist their all-out efforts in mobilising healthcare professionals within a short period of time to support the government's various epidemic containment measures.

During the meeting, Professor Chan; the Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Health), Mr Thomas Chan; and the Under Secretary for Food and Health, Dr Chui Tak-yi, briefed the representatives of the medical and health sector on the latest development of the severe situation of the epidemic and urged all medical groups to mobilise their healthcare professionals to fully support various anti-epidemic measures. A number of Executive Council and Legislative Council members from the medical profession, including Dr Lam Ching-choi, Dr Dennis Lam and Dr David Lam, also attended and appealed to the healthcare professions to mobilise all resources and work together to fight the epidemic.

Professor Chan said, "Since the outbreak of the fifth wave of the COVID-19 epidemic in end-December last year, our healthcare system has been facing unprecedented challenges and the numbers of confirmed cases and deaths have remained high. Our top priority now is not only to suppress the epidemic and reduce infection, but also to strengthen the protection for the elderly and children, and to reduce the numbers of severe cases and deaths caused by the epidemic. To this end, as the guardians of Hong Kong's public health and the health of our citizens, all healthcare professionals in Hong Kong have an obligatory duty to stand at the forefront of the fight against the epidemic to safeguard our people's health and save lives."

"With the full support given by the Central Government to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the development of a number of community isolation and treatment facilities has been expedited and the supply of anti-epidemic supplies and other daily necessities has been abundant. In the face of the current wave of epidemic, the healthcare professions in both the public and private sectors must make every effort to mobilise all available manpower, especially medical and nursing professionals, to support various anti-epidemic measures. With the strongest support provided by our country, healthcare professions in Hong Kong will make concerted efforts to combat the epidemic and treat the patients, so that Hong Kong can overcome the epidemic."

Professor Chan said that in the light of the epidemic development, the Government hoped that various medical groups could assist in implementing the following eight anti-epidemic measures:

- (1) Private hospitals continue to admit more patients referred by the Hospital Authority (HA)
- (2) Enhance healthcare services to support elderly patients
- (3) Provide medical support in community isolation facilities
- (4) Join the HA's anti-epidemic team
- (5) Assist in speeding up COVID-19 vaccination
- (6) Private hospitals and private clinics continue to admit patients and community pharmacies continue to operate
- (7) Provide telehealth services for COVID-19 patients
- (8) Enhance dissemination of anti-epidemic information and information on COVID-19 treatment to the public

During the meeting, representatives of the medical and health sector introduced the anti-epidemic work in which their group had participated so far and undertook to mobilise their healthcare professionals to assist in implementing the anti-epidemic measures mentioned above. The Food and Health Bureau will follow up with the medical groups on the implementation to ensure sufficient manpower support in each of the anti-epidemic measures.

Lastly, Professor Chan expressed her gratitude to the medical and health sector and healthcare professionals for their steadfast support for the Government on the anti-epidemic front in the past two years. She hoped that the sector would continue to mobilise all available strength in a concerted manner so that Hong Kong might come through the epidemic shortly.

