

SLW conveys appreciation to enterprise donations for isolation and holding centres to commence service progressively (with photos/video)

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, today (March 14) conveyed his appreciation to China Resources Charity Foundation for its donation of 1 000 hospital beds to the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and assistance to the Government to set up isolation and holding centres in various sports centres.

Dr Law visited Harbour Road Sports Centre in Wan Chai and inspected the newly installed beds. He said at the donation ceremony, "The establishment of isolation and holding centres is to look after frail elderly COVID-19 patients in stable condition with mild symptoms or under recovery. They are referred by the Hospital Authority to cater for the needs of residents and elderly persons who may not return to their residential care homes (RCHs) or residences respectively immediately. The purpose is to vacate hospital beds to provide medical and care services to persons with greater needs. We are setting up isolation and holding centres for the elderly in more venues deemed appropriate as an en-route stop in lieu of hospital admission. We are grateful to enterprises for their caring donations as well as the elderly service and healthcare sectors for responding to our call, so that manpower and resources are in place for social capital to meet community needs."

Managed and operated by the SWD, the isolation and holding centres include Choi Wing Road Sports Centre in Kwun Tong and Shek Kip Mei Park Sports Centre, which have entered into service respectively since February. Harbour Road Sports Centre will commence service this Wednesday (March 16), while the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal is expected to come into operation next week by phases. Under the triage system implemented by the health authority, more holding centres are under active planning. These centres will provide medical support and care services for the elderly without charge.

Dr Law said, "The Government is expediting COVID-19 vaccination for residents of RCHs to enhance protection for all residents. On increasing manpower, the dual-track recruitment both locally and in the Mainland are in progress. The first three batches of Mainland care workers totalling some 120 have entered service or are under training. About 240 more are expected to arrive within this week. We are committed to keeping pace with the rapidly changing epidemic and are trying our very best to protect the elderly. We are working at full steam to co-ordinate treatment and care services, and are making the best efforts to mobilise manpower and resources available to reduce critical cases and deaths."

