

Staff from government department and its contractors participate in outreach vaccination (with photos)

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, and the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, visited the headquarters of the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) in Kowloon Bay today (July 16). Accompanied by the Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services, Mr Eric Pang, they viewed the administering of the BioNTech vaccine to around 210 staff members of the department and its contractors as arranged by the Government's outreach vaccination service.

"Colleagues of the EMSD and employees from its contractors have to visit different government buildings in their daily work. They can protect themselves as well as their colleagues and families if they are vaccinated. I hope that colleagues from bureaux and departments will actively support the vaccination programme and get vaccinated," Mr Nip said.

Mr Wong said, "Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the EMSD has been maintaining strong awareness of epidemic prevention and continued to provide professional services to government departments and public organisations with commitment and dedication. I thank colleagues and contractors for participating in and supporting the vaccination programme. I also appeal to the general public to grasp the opportunity and get vaccinated as soon as possible to protect themselves and their families."

Mr Nip said that as a team serving the public, no matter in meeting the expectations of the community or safeguarding the health of fellow colleagues or the people being served, it was the obligation of all civil servants to proactively receive vaccination. "In order to encourage government employees to get vaccinated as soon as possible, they will be granted vaccination leave to allow sufficient time for them to recuperate after getting vaccinated. Vaccination is the key measure for the Government to protect frontline colleagues. According to the preliminary information on applications for vaccination leave provided by bureaux and departments, over half of the civil servants have received their first dose of a vaccine," he added.

"To ensure that services provided by the Government will neither become a part of the transmission chain nor be suspended because of infections contracted by staff, we have implemented the vaccination in lieu of regular testing (VRT) arrangement for specific groups of frontline government employees since May 31. As at the end of June, around 64 000 frontline government employees had participated in the VRT arrangement, and over 70 per cent of them are vaccinated. In view of the emergence of cases involving mutant strains with much higher transmissibility, the Government will expand the VRT arrangement to cover all frontline government employees in mid-July, such as those responsible for maintaining essential public services and

having direct contact with members of the public, and those whose frontline duties are performed in an indoor office setting. In addition, those who perform out-of-office duties not of an enforcement, inspection or investigation nature but have frequent and close contact with members of the public or are involved in work with a greater risk of exposure to COVID-19 will be covered under the expanded VRT arrangement at this stage. We will continue to closely monitor the situation and review in a timely manner the implementation of the VRT arrangement. We will also consider further expanding the VRT arrangement to cover the entire civil service to ensure that government bureaux and departments have a strong enough defence against the COVID-19 virus and its mutant strains."

Should enterprises and organisations have a sufficient number of employees who would like to get vaccinated and a suitable venue with sufficient space, they can make use of the outreach vaccination service so that their employees can be vaccinated in a more convenient way. Enterprises and groups can call the hotline for the outreach vaccination service at 3904 1490 from Monday to Friday, from 9am to 6pm, for arrangements.

There has been enthusiastic support for the outreach vaccination programme since it was launched by the Civil Service Bureau. The bureau has provided the outreach vaccination service to the Hong Kong Sports Institute, global professional services enterprises, property developers, financial institutions, the construction industry, public utilities, a property management company, universities, a theme park and a district organisation.

Mr Nip expressed his gratitude to the medical team and administrative support staff of the Community Vaccination Centre at Ho Man Tin Sports Centre for providing the outreach service today.



