

## SWD provides COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits to RCHE and RCHD staff members

To reduce the risks of virus transmission in residential care homes (RCHs), the Social Welfare Department (SWD) provided the first batch of free COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits (rapid antigen test kits) on February 7 to staff members of all residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) and residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) so that they can perform the test once every three days. Based on the latest epidemic risk assessment, the SWD has again arranged the delivery of antigen test kits to the RCHs today (February 15) and tomorrow (February 16) so that the frequency of rapid tests for staff members can be increased from once every three days to a daily basis starting from tomorrow.

Operators of RCHs should remind their staff members that they are required to perform the rapid tests on their own and obtain negative results before attending work at RCHs. If a positive result is obtained, the staff member concerned has to suspend his/her duties temporarily and follow up as appropriate in accordance with the guidelines of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health. The staff members are also required to keep records of their test results for checking by the designated persons-in-charge of the RCHs.

The rapid test arrangement for staff members of the RCHs cannot replace the test as specified in the compulsory testing notice under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J). The staff members still have to undergo polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid tests for COVID-19 in accordance with the latest requirements and procedures of the notice.

In addition, the SWD has arranged delivery of rapid antigen test kits today and tomorrow to staff members that provide residential child care services, community care services for the elderly and rehabilitation community support services, so that they can take rapid tests before work.