

LegCo Public Accounts Committee to hold public hearing tomorrow

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Public Accounts Committee (PAC) will hold a public hearing on "Integrated education" (Chapter 3) of the Director of Audit's Report No.70 at 9am tomorrow (June 12) in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex.

Seven witnesses have been invited to appear before the above hearing to respond to points raised in the Report and answer questions asked by PAC members.

The programme for the public hearing is as follows:

Date: June 12, 2018 (Tuesday)

Time: 9am

Venue: Conference Room 1

Subject: Integrated education (Chapter 3 of the Director of Audit's Report No.70)

Witnesses:

Secretary for Education

Mr Kevin Yeung

Permanent Secretary for Education

Mrs Ingrid Yeung

Deputy Secretary for Education (3)

Mrs Michelle Wong

Principal Assistant Secretary (Special Education), Education Bureau

Mr Godwin Lai

Principal Education Officer (Special Education), Education Bureau

Dr Verena Lau

Senior Specialist (Speech Therapy), Education Bureau

Miss Louise Hui

Senior Specialist (Special Education Support 4), Education Bureau

Mr Martin Mui

PAC is chaired by Mr Abraham Shek, and its Deputy Chairman is Mr Kenneth Leung. Other members include Mr Paul Tse, Mr Steven Ho, Mr Lam Cheuk-ting, Mr Shiu Ka-fai and Ms Tanya Chan.

Update on cases of Legionnaires' disease

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (June 11) reported the latest number of cases of Legionnaires' disease (LD), and stressed the importance of using and maintaining properly designed man-made water systems, and that susceptible groups should strictly observe relevant precautions.

From June 3 to 9, one community-acquired LD case was reported. The 64-year-old male patient, with good past health, lives in Elegant Court, Phase 2, Pictorial Garden, 23 On King Street, Sha Tin District.

"Epidemiological investigations are ongoing to identify potential sources of infection, high-risk exposure and clusters, if any," a spokesman for the CHP said.

As of June 9, 22 LD cases had been reported in 2018. In 2017 and 2016, there were 72 and 75 cases respectively.

"Men, people aged over 50, smokers, alcoholics and persons with weakened immunity are more susceptible to LD. Some situations may also increase the risk of infection, including poor maintenance of water systems leading to stagnant water; living in areas with old water systems, cooling towers or fountains; using electric water heaters, whirlpools and spas or hot water spring spas; and recent stays in hotels or vessels," the spokesman said.

Legionellae are found in various environmental settings and grow well in warm water (20 to 45 degrees Celsius). They can be found in aqueous environments such as water tanks, hot and cold water systems, cooling towers, whirlpools and spas, water fountains and home apparatus which support breathing. People may get infected when they breathe in contaminated droplets (aerosols) and mist generated by artificial water systems, or when handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes.

Immunocompromised persons should:

- Use sterile or boiled water for drinking, tooth brushing and mouth rinsing;
- Avoid using humidifiers, or other mist- or aerosol-generating devices. A shower may also generate small aerosols; and
- If using these devices, fill the water tank with only sterile or cooled freshly boiled water, and not tap water. Also, clean and maintain them regularly according to manufacturers' instructions. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, wipe all surfaces dry, and change the water daily.

The public should observe the health advice below:

- Observe personal hygiene;
- Do not smoke and avoid alcohol;
- Remove strainers in water taps and shower heads quarterly for cleaning;
- If a fresh water plumbing system is properly maintained, it is not necessary to install domestic water filters. Use of water filters is not encouraged as clogging occurs easily, which can promote growth of micro-organisms. In case water filters are used, the pore size should be 0.2 micrometres (μm) and they need to be changed periodically;
- Drain and clean water tanks of buildings at least quarterly;
- Drain or purge for at least one minute the infrequently used water outlets (e.g. water taps, shower heads and hot water outlets) and stagnant points of the pipework weekly or before use;
- Seek and follow medical advice regarding the use and maintenance of home respiratory devices and use only sterile (not distilled or tap) water to clean and fill the reservoir. Clean and maintain them regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. After cleaning/disinfection, rinse the device with sterile water, cooled freshly boiled water or water filtered with 0.2- μm filters. Never leave stagnant water. Empty the water tank, keep all surfaces dry, and change the water daily; and
- When handling garden soil, compost and potting mixes:
 1. Water gardens and compost gently using low pressure;
 2. Open composted potting mixes slowly and make sure the opening is directed away from the face;
 3. Wet the soil to reduce dust when potting plants; and
 4. Avoid working in poorly ventilated places such as enclosed greenhouses.

The public may visit the CHP's [LD page](#), the [Code of Practice for Prevention of LD](#) and the [Housekeeping Guidelines for Cold and Hot Water Systems for Building Management](#) of the Prevention of LD Committee, and the CHP's [risk-based strategy](#) for prevention and control of LD.

[Transcript of remarks by STH](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at a media session after attending the public hearing of the Legislative Council Public Accounts Committee today (June 11):

Reporter: Mr Chan, do you, yourself, know that one of the subcontractors has been contacting the Government about the scandal? Has the Government not learnt enough in this case? Has someone not done the job to alert the top minister about this incident?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: In respect of the question you just asked, my colleagues in office, at the time when they received the email (from China Technology Corporation Limited), they had promptly sent it to the subject team to follow up. Our colleagues at the Highways Department have also followed up with the China Technology and the MTR (Corporation Limited). So far, we have very openly disclosed to the media all the facts and data. If you like, you may refer to those press statements.

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

HA announces enhanced clinic booking with voice input

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) today (June 11) announced the introduction of a new voice input method in the general out-patient clinic (GOPC) telephone appointment system to become effective from 5pm this Saturday (June 16) to make it easier for the public to book a medical consultation service.

According to the HA spokesperson, the Authority has been soliciting and gathering public views and suggestions on the GOPC telephone appointment system with a view to continuously improving and enhancing the services. "While the system has all along been providing the key-in mode of input, the voice input method is being introduced to offer one more option to cater to the specific needs of different users, such as elders, in making telephone bookings. With the new function in place, users can complete the appointment booking by simply narrating the personal information under the instructions.

"The voice input method is able to recognise three different languages, namely Cantonese, English and Putonghua. While the original key-in mode will remain, the flow of appointment bookings of the two input methods is identical. Users are allowed to choose between the two that suit them best to make an appointment booking. They have to provide the required information under instructions through a clear voice input," the spokesperson added. Notice will be posted in the clinics to inform members of the public of the introduction of the new voice input method.

The spokesperson said that the HA has recently added 75 lines to the telephone appointment system to cope with the increasing demand for general outpatient services, thereby enhancing the accessibility of the service. Furthermore, a total of 55,000 additional consultations is also planned for the GOPC service in the current financial year (2018-19).

Launched in 2006, the GOPC telephone appointment system allows patients

to make appointments at home instead of queuing for discs, thereby alleviating the problems of overcrowding and long waiting times in clinics as well as reducing the risk of cross-infection among patients. Through the system, which currently operates round-the-clock with about 800 lines, patients with episodic diseases can book, at any time of the day, consultation time slots at GOPCs during the next 24 hours.

Labour Department to hold seminar on Minimum Wage Ordinance

The Labour Department will hold a seminar on the Minimum Wage Ordinance on July 9 (Monday) at 2.30pm at the Lecture Hall of the Hong Kong Space Museum, 10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui. Enrolment is now open.

The main provisions of the Minimum Wage Ordinance as well as family-friendly employment practices will be introduced. Employers, human resources practitioners and employees are welcome to attend.

The seminar will be conducted in Cantonese and admission is free. Seats will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and the enrolment deadline is June 27. The enrolment form can be downloaded from the department's website (www.labour.gov.hk). For enquiries, please call 2852 3861.