

[EPD clarifies on matters relating to sales of designated bags for municipal solid waste charging circulated on Internet](#)

In response to the allegation circulated on the Internet regarding the sales of products claiming to be pre-paid designated bags (DBs) for municipal solid waste (MSW) charging, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) made the following clarification yesterday (January 5):

The EPD noticed that several pictures of a green garbage bag, titled "Designated Bag for Hong Kong Municipal Solid Waste Charging Next Year", have recently been forwarded to an online discussion forum, and that same type of garbage bag is available for sale online. The garbage bag concerned is imprinted with characters including "Designated Bag" and "For Trial Only". The department suspected that garbage bag is a dummy DB which was provided by the EPD to residents for trial use under its trial projects, which had commenced since 2018, for cultivating their new waste disposal practices, and the associated trial projects were completed at the end of 2023. The EPD emphasises that people are not allowed to use dummy DBs for depositing waste after the commencement of MSW charging, otherwise they may contravene legislations relating to MSW charging. The EPD has also notified the Hong Kong Customs of the the findings for their follow-up investigations.

As provided in the Waste Disposal Ordinance (Cap. 354), DBs and designated labels (DLs) shall only be sold by persons authorised by the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) on prescribed terms to prevent counterfeit DBs and DLs from being supplied in the market. Any unauthorised person who sells DBs and DLs is liable on conviction to a maximum fine of \$200,000. Over 3 000 sales points and online platforms authorised by the DEP will start selling DBs and DLs from next month onwards, with details to be announced later this month.

The EPD has completed registering trade marks for the designs of DBs of different capacities and DLs to guard against possible counterfeit products and eradicate copyright infringement activities. Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses, for the purpose of selling, counterfeit goods commits an offence, and is liable on conviction to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and to imprisonment for five years. Members of the public may report such activities to the Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

CHP investigates local measles infection case

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) is today (January 5) investigating a local case of measles infection and reminded the public that vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles.

The case involves a three-year-old boy with good past health. He had developed fever since December 22 last year and visited a private doctor on the same day and his condition improved. Later, he presented with cough, runny nose and rash. He attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Kwong Wah Hospital on December 28 and was admitted on the same day. He is in stable condition after treatment and was discharged on January 2.

His blood sample tested positive for immunoglobulin M (IgM) antibodies to measles virus upon laboratory testing. The patient has received measles vaccinations and had no travel history during the incubation period. His three household contacts are currently asymptomatic.

According to information provided by the family of the patient, he had travelled to the Mainland during the communicable period. He took a cross-boundary coach operated by "Trans-Island Chinalink" from Shanghai Street, Prince Edward, at around 10.35am on December 27 to Fuxiang Bay, Hengqin New District, Zhuhai. He returned to Hong Kong by taking the cross-boundary coach at about 5.50pm on December 28.

The CHP is carrying out contact tracing for the case. Measles is highly infectious and the transmission risk at crowded environment (such as transportation) is higher. Since there is no contact information of all passengers who took the relevant routes at the abovementioned period, the CHP has set up an enquiry hotline (2125 2374) and appealed to the relevant passengers to call the hotline. Officers of the CHP will assess their condition and offer suggestions. The hotline will operate from 9am to 1pm tomorrow (January 6) and on January 7, and from 9am to 5.30pm starting from January 8, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

Investigations are ongoing.

"Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles. Members of the public who are planning to travel to places with a high incidence or outbreaks of measles should review their vaccination history and past medical history, especially people born outside Hong Kong who might not have received a measles vaccination during childhood. Those who have not received two doses of measles-containing vaccines, with unknown vaccination history or unknown immunity against measles, are urged to consult their doctor for advice on vaccinations at least two weeks before departure," a spokesman for the DH said.

Measles is a highly infectious disease caused by the measles virus. It can be transmitted by airborne droplets or direct contact with nasal or throat secretions of infected persons, and, less commonly, by articles soiled with nose and throat secretions. A patient can pass the disease to other persons from four days before to four days after the appearance of a skin rash.

The spokesman advised, "The incubation period (the period from infection to appearance of illness) of measles ranges from seven days to 21 days. Symptoms of measles include fever, skin rash, cough, runny nose and red eyes. If symptoms arise, members of the public should wear surgical masks, stop going to work or school and avoid going to crowded places. They should also avoid contact with non-immune persons, especially persons with weakened immunity, pregnant women and children aged below 1. Those suspected to have been infected are advised to seek medical attention as early as possible and reveal relevant contact history of measles to healthcare professionals."

Besides being vaccinated against measles, members of the public should take the following measures to prevent infection:

- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Keep hands clean and wash hands properly;
- Wash hands when they are dirtied by respiratory secretions, such as after sneezing;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and dispose of nasal and mouth discharge properly;
- Clean used toys and furniture properly; and
- Persons with measles should be kept out of school till four days from the appearance of a rash to prevent the spread of the infection to non-immune persons in school.

For more information on measles, the public may visit the CHP's [measles thematic page](#). Members of the public who are going to travel can visit the website of the DH's [Travel Health Service](#) for news of measles outbreaks outside Hong Kong.

[New service points for opening eHealth accounts to facilitate access to government health services by citizens](#)

The Health Bureau announced today (January 5) the provision of eHealth account opening services at 18 designated post offices to assist members of the public to register early as eHealth users. The new measure aims to enable

citizens in accessing various government health services while the Government is gradually extending the requirement of having an eHealth account to use these services starting this year.

At present, some 80 per cent of Hong Kong citizens are eHealth users. The Government calls on citizens who have not yet registered with eHealth to take action as early as possible in order to continue enjoying various government health services. As a further facilitation, the Government has designated one post office in each of the 18 districts across Hong Kong (see Annex) to provide eHealth account opening service. Citizens simply need to bring their identity documents to the post office. The staff will verify their identity on-site and assist them to complete the registration for the account-opening process. The Government is also planning to extend the eHealth account-opening service to more post offices in the future.

Apart from the new registration channel through post offices, citizens may also continue to make use of multiple existing channels to open eHealth accounts:

- Register online and open accounts in one go upon identity verification through the "iAM Smart" mobile application;
- Register on the eHealth website and complete identity verification by presenting identity documents at the 63 [Electronic Health Record \(eHR\) Registration Centres](#) of the Hospital Authority (HA) or the Department of Health (DH), the eight [eHealth mobile registration counters](#), about 4 800 [service locations of private healthcare providers](#) and the [eHR Registration Office](#) located at Kowloon Bay in person for opening an eHealth account;
- Visit the above locations direct in person with identity documents for registration and opening eHealth accounts upon identity verification; and
- Visit various District Health Centres (DHCs) to register as members and open eHealth accounts.

Methods for account opening, addresses and operating hours of service points are detailed on the [eHealth website](#). Since November last year, a default consent arrangement was made in the system to register participating citizens of government-subsidised vaccination schemes with eHealth as a streamlined registration procedure.

The Government will roll out the eHealth+ as announced in the 2023 Policy Address. One of the main directions is to centralise the storage of digital health records from both public and private sectors and to integrate different healthcare protocols through a personalised eHealth account for individual citizens. It is already a current requirement for citizens who receive services at the DHCs, enrol in the Chronic Disease Co-Care Pilot Scheme launched in mid-November last year, or participate in the Public Private Partnership Programmes of the DH and the HA to use eHealth. To foster the development of primary healthcare services, the Government will gradually extend the arrangement for use of eHealth from this year to other government health services, including government-subsidised vaccination schemes and the

Elderly Health Care Voucher Scheme. Another major future development of the eHealth+ system is to support various cross-boundary medical collaboration initiatives within the Greater Bay Area including the Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme. Measures will be introduced later to enable citizens to bring their health records to seek medical treatment across the boundary.

The Government has been striving to optimise the eHealth mobile application with a view to enabling members of the public to have better control and management of their health records. A number of functions have been added to allow citizens to record and manage their personal health data, such as accessing records of government-subsidised vaccination schemes, making appointments at selected clinics under the DH and the HA, checking the balance of the Elderly Health Care Voucher, and managing and integrating blood pressure and blood glucose indexes for healthcare personnel's reference.

For other details about eHealth, members of the public may visit the [website](#) or call the hotline at 3467 6300.

Update on cluster of Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci cases and parainfluenza cases in Kowloon West Cluster

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on Vancomycin Resistant Enterococci (VRE) carrier cases and a cluster of patients infected with parainfluenza virus, the spokesperson for Kowloon West Cluster (KWC) gave the following update today (January 5):

According to the contact tracing result of Princess Margaret Hospital, a 58-year-old male in the orthopaedic ward was identified as a carrier of VRE while not having signs of infection. The patient is now being treated in isolation and is in stable condition.

In addition, one more 45-year-old patient in a female ward of learning disabilities of Kwai Chung Hospital has presented with fever and respiratory symptoms since January 3. An appropriate viral test was arranged for the patient and the test result was positive for parainfluenza virus type 3. The patient concerned is currently under treatment and is in stable condition. Admission to the ward has been suspended.

The wards concerned has adopted the following enhanced infection control measures:

1. Enhanced hand hygiene and stringent contact precautions;
2. Enhanced attention to contamination-prone procedures; and
3. Enhanced disinfection and cleaning of the ward concerned.

The KWC will continue to closely monitor the situation of the wards and the patients. The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

Government announces arrangements of community isolation facility site at southern end of Loop

The Government announced today (January 5) that to facilitate the development of the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone, about five hectares of land will be released from the southern end of the Hong Kong Park in the Loop for the construction of five buildings in batch one under Phase 1 of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park, advancing the development of the Hong Kong Park. Batch one of Phase 1 comprises eight buildings. The first three buildings, under construction by the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park Limited, are scheduled for completion in phases from the end of 2024.

To implement the principle of making good use of community isolation facilities (CIFs), the Government will transfer the CIFs at the aforementioned site to other suitable locations for reconfiguration and reuse in an orderly manner. The CIFs will be mainly transferred to various construction sites of government works projects to serve as site offices and related facilities, such as rest rooms for site staff and material storage rooms. The Development Bureau will arrange for the constructors to begin transferring the facilities soon, aiming to complete the process within the first quarter. Thereafter, the Civil Engineering and Development Department will commence the site formation works on the five-hectare site so as to begin the construction of the remaining five buildings in batch one as early as possible.

In respect of the Central Government-Aided Emergency Hospital in the Loop, the Hospital Authority (HA) has been providing ambulatory diagnostic radiology services there since April 2023, and this has considerably shortened patient waiting times and has relieved the pressure on radiology services in public hospitals. Since October 2023, the services have been

expanded to include microbiological examinations, diagnostic endoscopies, sleep studies, etc, with a view to enhancing the capacity of public healthcare services. The measures have been well received by the public. The HA will continue to make better use of the specialised medical equipment and facilities in the hospital, and explore uses for healthcare-related purposes in order to meet local healthcare needs.

The Government has earlier announced the arrangements for using the CIFs in Tam Mei, Yuen Long; Tsing Yi and San Tin. After necessary modifications, the CIF in Tam Mei, Yuen Long, is being used as centralised quarters for imported labour for the construction sector from late October 2023. The San Tin CIF is being used to hold training courses and trade tests for the construction industry from late November 2023. The Tsing Yi CIF will provide a venue and ancillary facilities to youth uniformed groups for holding trainings on flag raising, foot drills and other youth development-related activities in the near future.

The Government will continue to make subsequent arrangements for other community isolation and treatment facilities, releasing the sites in phases or utilising the facilities for other purposes. Announcements will be made and the implementation of related work will be carried out in a timely and orderly manner. It is the Government's goal to maintain the city's capacity to respond to changes in the epidemic situation, while taking into account Hong Kong's economic, livelihood and social needs.