

# Testing for staff at Hong Kong International Airport continues

The one-off compulsory testing scheme for airport staff, implemented by the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AA) following appointment by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, was completed on February 25. A voluntary weekly testing scheme for certain target groups will commence on March 5 while the ongoing free testing services for all other airport staff will continue.

During the period from February 4 to 25, over 87 000 airport staff members underwent polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid testing for COVID-19, in accordance with the compulsory testing notice issued by the Secretary for Food and Health issued on February 2. No positive cases were recorded among those tested.

The active participation of airport staff in the testing scheme has demonstrated the continual strong support of members of the airport community for the implementation of various anti-epidemic measures, thereby contributing to the protection of public health in Hong Kong. The record of no positive cases among those tested is a testament to the tight and effective anti-epidemic measures undertaken at the airport, as well as the heightened sense of protection against infection among airport staff. The Government would like to thank the AA for its staunch support in the overall anti-epidemic and testing measures, as well as implementing this compulsory testing scheme in an organised matter.

As an important part of the COVID-19 infection control strategy of "preventing the importation of cases and the spreading of the virus in the community", this compulsory testing scheme is a proactive anti-epidemic measure by the Government to identify symptomless infected individuals in the airport community and break any silent chains of community transmission through one-off mass testing. As the next step, the Government and the AA will roll out a voluntary weekly testing scheme, starting on March 5, targeting certain groups of airport staff, such as the persons carrying out quarantine procedures at the airport, handling cold chain logistics and cleaning aircraft cabins, who may have a higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 from outside Hong Kong. Free tests will be provided to the aforesaid staff. The AA has already informed the relevant companies of the details of the testing scheme. In order to protect the health of such staff as well as the airport community as a whole, the Government appeals to the relevant staff for their active participation in the scheme. The AA will set up a dedicated testing centre at the airport, and hopes that the relevant employers can facilitate the participation of their staff in the scheme.

As for other airport staff, the Government will continue to provide deep throat saliva specimen bottles at Terminal 1 of the airport to meet their testing needs as far as possible.

The Government urges the airport community to actively participate in the aforesaid schemes in an effort to protect public health and minimise the risk of community transmission, thereby contributing to the overall control of the epidemic.