

Transcript of remarks by SCS at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, at a media session after attending a radio programme this morning (February 5):

Reporter: Mr Nip, looking at future tightening of social distancing measures, what directions are we looking at? And my second question is regarding distributing rapid test kits to everyone in the city. Expert had kind of question on its effectiveness, he said it is not very effective in cutting transmission chains, when it is only for one time and on top of it, it is voluntary. So, what is your response to that?

Secretary for the Civil Service: As regards the first question on social distancing measures, in view of the very serious epidemic situation now in Hong Kong, it's very important for our social distancing measures to achieve one single objective – to drastically reduce the people's flow in the community and reduce social contact so that we can cut all the transmission links. So it is very important. When we decide on what sort of social distancing measures that are required, basically we would look at the outcome and the effect of such measures, whether it would effectively reduce the flow of people in the community so as to achieve our objective of cutting all these transmission links.

As regards the rapid antigen test, it's clear that the rapid antigen test has the advantages of easy to administer, rapidly getting the results. But, of course, its sensitivity is no way comparable with the PCR test (polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid test). For the rapid antigen test that we are using, basically it could detect any CT value of, or below, 28, so it is reasonably sensitive, so to speak. We are not just deploying the rapid antigen test, we have several tiers of testing regime, including the compulsory testing notice and the restriction-testing declarations which are using the PCR test. But because of the very serious epidemic situation and the convenience these rapid antigen tests that can provide, I think it is a very good supplement to enable our citizens, our public to have access to these rapid antigen tests, so that they can know the quick results of whether they got infected or not. You could administer it daily or one time for several days. So I think we should look at it in totality, it is a sort of a supplement.

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