

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, after attending a radio programme today (May 1):

Reporter: Is there any plan to extend the deadline for domestic helpers to get tested because many employers say they don't have sufficient time to ask the helpers to get tested? Secondly, many migrant workers groups have complained that it is unjust to only ask foreign domestic helpers to get tested and vaccinated, how can you convince that this is not the case?

Secretary for Food and Health: First of all, as far as the compulsory testing of foreign domestic helpers is concerned, we have issued the compulsory testing notice which is effective until May 9. We are trying to give a longer time for testing because of the number of people involved. Also, if you noticed, there are two weekends. We want to facilitate the testing of foreign domestic helpers. On the other hand, it is important for us to increase the capacity of our testing to cater for compulsory testing for a large number of people. The Labour Department has already organised four mobile testing stations at the sites where there are lots of foreign domestic helpers gathering during the weekend. On top of the 21 community testing centres that we already have, we are also setting up, starting from today, a total of another ten mobile stations including those designated for foreign domestic helpers as well as to cater for the needs of other compulsory testing. We will continue to monitor the situation and see whether further adjustment is needed. For the community testing centres, we are also extending the opening hours to until 10pm instead of 8pm so as to cater for the needs of compulsory testing in the coming days.

Reporter: Migrant workers say it is unjust for them to be asked to get vaccinated.....

Secretary for Food and Health: I think as far as migrant workers or foreign domestic helpers are concerned, it's all really risk-based. In a very short time, we have already identified two foreign domestic helpers who have the variants of concern. Therefore, we think it is important for us to ask all foreign domestic helpers, as a very stringent, preventive and control measure, to do compulsory testing so that we can find out and identify the cases and prevent any outbreak. Any further outbreak would be detrimental to the current situation in Hong Kong. In order to protect the health and safety of people in Hong Kong, I think the prevention and control measures including compulsory testing, including quarantines and additional number of tests coupled with the stringent border control measures are really something we have to move ahead.

As far as vaccination is concerned, as I have said many times, it can protect us so that when we unluckily contracted COVID-19, the overall

clinical situation would be less severe. I think in order to protect individuals and our family, vaccination is something that we should move ahead and get vaccinated. As far as the entire community is concerned, it is also important for us to build herd immunity so that everybody is being protected including those who can't be vaccinated. So, this is a very important measure. There is no discrimination in the measures that the Government has recently come up with.

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