

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 (April 16):

Reporter: Secretary, do the authorities have a threshold on when social distancing measures will be dropped back if there is a rebound? My second question is, do we have enough quarantine facilities and isolation facilities ready if the rebound comes after the Easter holidays especially after the social distancing measures are eased?

Secretary for Food and Health: First of all, the Government has announced that the social distancing measures are going to be relaxed by stages from April 21. We haven't relaxed them. But we are also concerned about the situation during the Easter holidays that people are going out and the people flow is increasing. Therefore, there could be a rebound, we are monitoring it very closely. After the relaxation, obviously we have to continue monitor the overall situation. We do not have a pre-set number of confirmed cases for retracking the social distancing measures. We need to monitor a basket of factors, including the overall epidemic trend on the number of confirmed cases, sewage study and some of the indicators such as the R0 indicator as well as the point prevalence indicator done by the University of Hong Kong. Of course, we also would have to look at and review our capacity. While the fifth wave, we have built up our capacity in terms of designated hospitals and community isolation facilities with the help of the Central People's Government in a very short period of time. We are confident that if there is a rebound, we are able to cope with the situation.

Prevention is always better than cure. Therefore, vaccination is still a very important intervention in order to prevent and protect people from going into severe cases and prevent deaths. For those elderly and children who had not have a chance to have vaccination, I would appeal to them to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Second, during the holidays, if there is too much people flow, there is still a risk of infection. While the number has now gone to three digits, it's still very high. That means there are still transmission chains in the community. Therefore, I also strongly appeal to the public that they should not go to places where are very crowded and; should keep their own personal and environmental hygiene so that the whole community is working together to fight this pandemic. Thank you.

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