

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, at a media session at the Central Government Offices today (January 24):

Secretary for Food and Health: Good morning. This morning I chaired an inter-departmental meeting to review the latest flu situation, including the flu surveillance situation in particular in kindergartens and child care centres. Representatives from the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), the Hospital Authority, the Education Bureau and also the Social Welfare Department participated in the inter-departmental meeting this morning. We have reviewed the latest flu situation. The CHP has reported the latest situation and the representatives from the Hospital Authority (HA) have also given us some figures about the latest situation in terms of the paediatric ward occupancy and admission statistics.

After considering a basket of factors, including the latest surveillance situation, the number of outbreaks at kindergartens and child care centres, the statistics of paediatric ward admission as well as occupancy of the HA's hospitals, I would like to announce that kindergartens as well as child care centres would advance their Chinese New Year holidays, starting from this Saturday, i.e. January 26. We believe that this decision would be a preventive measure for the current flu situation, in particular in kindergartens as well as child care centres in which the children are usually below 6 years old.

We have now got representatives here not only from the HA and the Department of Health but also from the Education Bureau as well as the Social Welfare Department. We believe that this decision would give kindergartens and child care centres enough time to prepare for advancement of Chinese New Year holidays. I would now need to rush back to the Legislative Council for motion debate. My colleague from the CHP, Dr Wong Ka-hing, will now talk about the latest flu surveillance situation and other colleagues will answer questions. Thank you.

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