

Transcript of remarks by SFH at media session (with photos)

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, after inspecting the new facility for keeping abortuses, the Garden of Forever Love, at the Wo Hop Shek Columbarium Phase V today (April 10):

Reporter: Why do you take years to set up this public burial ground since the discussions over the burial of miscarried babies first came about? My second question is: does the Government have any plan to step up the prevention of measles, particularly we have more cases involving people working in the airport.

Secretary for Food and Health: First of all, we open this facility today. This is the first facility operated by the Government through the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) for burying abortuses of less than 24 weeks. As you can see, the environment is very quiet and we have different facilities for these parents to memorialise their babies or abortuses. We will start receiving applications tomorrow. We have plans to further increase the number of this type of facility in other columbaria – some new columbaria or new facilities within the existing columbaria.

As far as measles is concerned, the Government's strategy is first to protect our children, that is to ensure there are enough vaccines for our children in Hong Kong under the Childhood Immunisation Programme. Secondly, as the airport is having some outbreaks, people working in the airport are also the target. The Centre for Health Protection has already laid out the criteria of vaccination for airport staff. So far, it is running quite smoothly. The third target group is people who are working with patients, for example, the Hospital Authority's healthcare professionals, in particular, those who are working in high-risk areas. We will monitor the situation and look into whether the existing strategy would need to be changed or further strengthened. Of course, personal hygiene and personal protection are most important for every individual. So we appeal to the public that they should wear a mask if in doubt. They should maintain hand hygiene, wash hands, not go to crowded places and to ensure good air circulation. Finally, they should seek medical advice when they are not feeling well or when they have signs of fever, sneezing or coughing. These are our existing strategies and we will continue to monitor the situation.

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

