

# Transcript of remarks by SLW on support measures to RCHs in pandemic fight

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on measures to support residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) and residential care homes for persons with disabilities to fight the pandemic after attending a radio programme this morning (February 19):

Reporter: Secretary, if they don't really receive these recovered patients, what are the consequences to these care homes? What kind of help is the Government giving to these care homes when they are so short-staffed or facing such difficulties?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: Definitely, the issue of staffing is something which cannot be dealt with in a relatively short time. Shortage of staff in residential care homes (RCHs) has been with us for a long, long time. Basically, we are talking about vacancy rates at 20 to 25 per cent currently in RCHEs. But definitely, the primary responsibility of taking care of the discharged patients returning to RCHs lies with the RCH operators; and if they don't do that, they can be violating the Code of Practice for RCHs. Therefore, the Social Welfare Department will have the power to enforce that. The minimum thing is to issue warning letters basically, and there can be consequences if there are multiple warning letters. But we understand the challenges and difficulties they are facing, so we try our very best to advise and provide the support, the financial part, the personal protective equipment, etc. We will try our very best to help them to ease their pressure.

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