

## Transcript of remarks of press conference on anti-epidemic measures (with photo/video)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, held a press conference on anti-epidemic measures this morning (April 8). Also joining were the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, and the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip. Following is the transcript of remarks of the press conference:

Reporter: Only 19 people were vaccinated under the home vaccination scheme. Is it far below the Government's expectation? And the second question is, the Government has said the Chinese medicine experts from the Mainland have formulated plans for the use of Chinese medicine at home, diagnosis, rehabilitation as well as prevention and treatment. How will these plans be implemented and what are the details? And the last one is, a new team of Mainland experts has recently arrived in Hong Kong, and it was mentioned that they will offer guidance on Hong Kong's anti-epidemic work. As Hong Kong's number of infections has been gradually dropping, what will be the focus of their guidance? Thank you.

Chief Executive: I'll invite the Secretary for the Civil Service to respond to your question about this pilot of conducting vaccination for elderly people during RTD ("restriction-testing declaration") operations, and then I'll invite the Secretary for Food and Health to give you more details about the Mainland experts, especially the plans proposed by the Chinese medicine experts. Before I hand over to my two colleagues, I want to use this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to the Central Government for sending us successively five batches of Mainland experts. Other than the fifth batch, which only arrived yesterday, I have personally met with each and every of the four batches of Mainland experts. I am very impressed by their understanding of Hong Kong's situation after spending, maybe, a week or 10 days going round our various facilities, sitting down to talk to our experts and our officials, and coming up with very pragmatic measures that will help us, ranging from the treatment of critically ill COVID-19 patients to the use of Chinese medicine and even to the use of RAT (rapid antigen test). One of the suggestions is, having regard to Hong Kong's situation and the large number of cases we still had about two weeks ago, Professor Liang Wannian (Head of the National Health Commission's COVID-19 leading task force) gave us this very good advice: since Hong Kong people were now very used to the rapid antigen test, which is less labour-intensive very economical and very easy to do, the Hong Kong SAR Government should more progressively promote the use of the rapid antigen test in order to identify as early as possible the infected cases in Hong Kong. I just want to put on record that we should all appreciate this very pertinent advice coming from the Mainland experts. We will continue to do so, not only in fighting the COVID-19 epidemic but also in other longer-term curative and preventive work

including the promotion and development of traditional Chinese medicine in Hong Kong.

Secretary for the Civil Service: The pilot scheme on home vaccination was targeted at the buildings that were subject to RTD operations. Through the pilot scheme, we came to understand the number of the elderly aged 70 or above or those persons with disabilities who were unable to get vaccinated through other channels. So, the number is small. That's expected. For example, one of the buildings that I visited, 25 per cent of the residents got infected. Most of the residents got vaccinated and we could identify ranging from four to six persons per building that we can provide home vaccination. But these provided us with very useful operational experience in logistics and the flow and all the arrangements. And also, most importantly, if not for this home vaccination arrangement, these elderly or persons with disabilities would not be able to get vaccinated. So despite that it is a very labour, resource intensive exercise, I think it is very worth doing it, because we hope to see each and every one, particularly the vulnerable groups, to get vaccinated as early as possible. But then, with the online platform for registration to be launched later this month, we would expect much more registration coming in and then we will arrange the outreach medical team to do the home vaccination.

Secretary for Food and Health: Thank you for your two questions about the experts. First of all is the Chinese medicine experts. The Chinese medicine experts have given us very good advice in terms of fighting the epidemic in Hong Kong (and treatment) for different types of patients. They have also provided some treatment protocols, total four treatment protocols, to us for further implementation. We have organised an exchange meeting for the experts to introduce these treatment protocols to Hong Kong's Chinese medicine community and they were well accepted. What we are going to do is, first of all, to disseminate information about the treatment protocols. Secondly, the treatment protocols are to be implemented for different types of people. For example, one of them is a set of questions and answers for the general public on using Chinese medicine. Another protocol is for recovered patients on how to provide treatment and Chinese medicine for recovered patients. Third is for confirmed patients who are staying at home or close contacts who are staying at home. Finally, another proposal is for those who are staying in the community isolation facilities (CIFs), both the holding centres as well as the CIFs at large in general. As these platforms are already there and the Hong Kong SAR Government is already providing Chinese medicine for different people staying at different places in terms of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation, we found it not difficult to implement them. In fact, it is very easy for us to further implement these treatment protocols as well as take them forward.

Another intervention on the treatment is that one of the experts is actually working side by side with our Western medicine doctors in the AWE community treatment centre (Treatment Centre for COVID-19 at AsiaWorld-Expo). They take care of patients, have case conference together, give Chinese medicine as well as review the progress of these cases together. According to them, the treatments that have been given so far are very effective and the

patients are responding well. This group of experts has also met with those Western medicine doctors in the Hospital Authority to look after more severe cases and have more understanding about our cases. What they have been providing to us in terms of recommendations for the development of Chinese medicine in Hong Kong as well as how best to fight the epidemic and how to better use or increase the coverage of using Chinese medicine in fighting against COVID-19 has been very useful. We are working on the implementation details.

Secondly, about the fifth batch of experts. They are epidemiological experts generally providing advice to us on prevention and control of the epidemic situation right now. We all understand that we have hit the peak of the epidemic situation and the number of confirmed case is reducing but still we have over 2 000 cases every day. At this point in time, these experts have arrived and we will be having a meeting with them later this afternoon. We will discuss the latest situation and they would look at our current data and provide some analysis and recommendations to us. We will continue to work with them at the current stage of epidemic situation in Hong Kong. Thank you.

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

