

United Christian Hospital announces three preliminary positive COVID-19 inpatient cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for United Christian Hospital (UCH) made the following announcement regarding three preliminary positive COVID-19 inpatient cases today (December 23):

A 91-year-old female patient with terminal illness was admitted to a surgical ward in UCH on December 1. She was transferred to Palliative Care and Medical Ward on December 9 for further treatment. As she was clinically stable, she was discharged from the hospital on December 21. A community nurse visited the patient's home the next day to follow up on her and found that the patient was presented with mild shortness of breath and arranged for the patient to attend UCH Accident and Emergency Department (AED). Chest X-ray showed mild pneumonia and medical staff arranged COVID-19 nasopharyngeal swab test for her and the test result was preliminary positive. She was then transferred to isolation ward for further treatment and is currently in stable condition.

Admission and discharge of patients in the ward as well as compassionate visiting arrangements have been suspended with immediate effect. The hospital has arranged thorough cleansing and disinfection of the concerned ward. The hospital's infection control team conducted contact tracing and two other female patients (aged 84 and 71) who had stayed in the same cubicle of the ward with the confirmed patient were tested preliminary positive for COVID-19. A total of 11 close contacts have been identified related to the above-said patients. One of them passed away due to underlying illness while one of them was discharged. The discharged patient will be followed up by the Centre for Health Protection of the DH. The remaining nine patients and the succumbed patient were tested negative for COVID-19 and under isolation treatment. The Hospital also arranged viral tests for other patients in the ward and all results are negative. As a precautionary measure, the hospital arranged testing for 14 patients who were transferred to Haven of Hope Hospital and the results are negative as well. Healthcare workers in the Palliative Care and Medical Ward are undergoing viral tests and all results came back negative so far. Also, environmental samples from the cubicle are all negative.

During the home visit by our community nurse, the patient did not wear surgical mask properly and the nurse was classified as close contacts and needs to be quarantined. The Infection Control Team is now conducting further risk assessment and contact tracing for the nursing care and procedures and compassionate visiting arrangements during the patients' stay.

Patients in the Palliative Care and Medical Ward are patients with terminal illness, our healthcare staff will assess the patient's situation and the patient's as well as his/her family's wishes, together with our operational situation to consider compassionate visit so families could take care and support the patients. All visitors entering the ward are required to comply with the infection control measures, which includes take temperature testing, wear surgical masks and perform hand hygiene. To safeguard the wellbeing of our patients and staff, healthcare workers will ask each visitor individually whether they have any symptoms and contact history with confirmed or quarantined cases. UCH will continue to closely monitor the health of our staff and patients and communicate with the Centre for Health Protection about the latest situation and to investigate the patient's source of infection.