

Update on anti-epidemic medical supplies from Mainland

The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) said today (March 11) that the task force of ensuring medical supplies has been proactively coordinating with various government departments and units participating in anti-epidemic work on medical supplies needed and working closely with its Mainland counterparts to ensure that resources can be expeditiously supplied to Hong Kong to cope with the epidemic.

A spokesman for the CEDB said that with the full support from the Central Government, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has procured large quantities of medical supplies, including rapid antigen test (RAT) kits, proprietary Chinese medicines, personal protective equipment, which are arriving in Hong Kong in batches to cater for various anti-epidemic work. The task force has swiftly distributed the medical supplies to frontline personnel, confirmed patients and people in need through relevant government departments, the Hong Kong Community Anti-Coronavirus Link (the Link) and other local organisations, in order to fight the virus together.

Meanwhile, in collaboration with the task force of supplies from the Mainland led by the Transport and Housing Bureau, the overall transportation capacity of water and land transport including railway transport has been enhanced at a number of cross-boundary facilities. The Government Logistics Department has also set up a number of large-scale temporary storage areas (around 140 000 square metres), which has significantly increased Hong Kong's storage capacity and logistical efficiency.

The task force has so far procured more than 55 million RAT kits from the Mainland, over 20 per cent of which has been distributed to the Department of Health (DH) and other government departments continuously. RAT kits have also been distributed to local organisations through the Home Affairs Department (HAD) for the use of frontline anti-epidemic personnel, patients confirmed to have contracted COVID-19, individuals undergoing home quarantine under the "StayHomeSafe" Scheme, volunteers, persons with higher infection risks (such as residents subject to "restriction-testing declarations" or living in areas tested positive under sewage tracing), and people working in high-risk industries (such as cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers, property management staff, cleansing staff and staff of residential care homes for the elderly), the spokesman said.

The task force is receiving a total of 450 000 boxes of anti-epidemic proprietary Chinese medicines donated by the Central Government. To allow citizens in need to obtain these proprietary Chinese medicines as soon as possible, 170 000 boxes have been allocated to the HAD for distribution to the community through the Link and other organisations. Meanwhile, some of the proprietary Chinese medicines were distributed to residents subject to

"restriction-testing declarations" through the Food and Health Bureau. The remaining proprietary Chinese medicines are being distributed through the Hospital Authority (HA) to those receiving treatment and patients confirmed to have contracted COVID-19 at the 18 Chinese medicine clinics and isolation facilities.

The Central Government is also co-ordinating with Mainland manufacturers to speed up the supply to the Hong Kong retail market to ensure that the anti-epidemic proprietary Chinese medicines could be replenished in a timely manner. With the assistance rendered by the Central Government, the HKSAR Government will continue to procure a large quantity of anti-epidemic proprietary Chinese medicines, to increase the supply in Hong Kong with a view to safeguarding the health of members of the public. Also, RTHK TV 32, as a channel dedicated for disseminating anti-pandemic information, has produced editions for the public to better understand the efficacy of the anti-epidemic proprietary Chinese medicines and the points to note when taking them.

Regarding personal protective equipment, the task force has received over 83 million N95 masks, KN95 masks and surgical masks, as well as over 8.6 million of other protective equipment, including protective coveralls, protective gowns, goggles, face shields, shoe covers and surgical/examination gloves. These will be distributed to frontline personnel according to the needs of various government departments, such as the DH and the disciplined services.

More than 880 000 pulse oximeters have been received by the task force so far. Most of them have been distributed to the HA for patient use.

The spokesman said that the task force would continue to review the situation and procure more medical supplies through its Mainland counterparts according to the needs of various government departments to fight against the epidemic.