

香港特別行政區政府  
衛生署  
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胡忠大廈 17 樓及 21 樓



THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HONG KONG  
SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
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WANCHAI, HONG KONG

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24 February 2020

Dear health professionals,

### **Updated Situation of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**

Further to our letter on 14 February 2020, we would like to provide you an update on the development of coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19) and a new arrangement on the enhanced surveillance in General Out-patient Clinics (GOPCs) and Accident and Emergency Departments (AEDs) of the Hospital Authority (HA).

As of 23 February 2020 6pm, Hong Kong has recorded 74 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Twelve patients were discharged and two died. Among the remaining 60 patients who are hospitalized, 53 are in stable condition and 7 in serious condition. The epidemiological investigation by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) revealed that while the initial cases recorded in January were mostly imported or imported related cases, the majority of cases (56/61, 91.8%) reported since 1 February were local cases, possibly local cases, and their close contacts, indicating community transmissions locally. Transmission in closed settings especially households is a hallmark of the recent cases recorded in Hong Kong. A total of 19 clusters involving 52 cases (70%) were recorded. Contact tracing and investigations for the confirmed cases are ongoing.

Since 19 February 2020, CHP has collaborated with HA to expand the surveillance of COVID-19 to GOPCs and AEDs. GOPC and AED patients

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aged 18 or above, presented with fever and respiratory symptoms or mild chest infection, will be given a specimen bottle for the collection of deep throat saliva in the early morning of the following day, if hospital admission is considered unnecessary according to clinical assessment. Patients are required to return the specimens to the AED or GOPC for SAR-CoV-2 laboratory testing. One confirmed case was detected through this surveillance so far.

As some cases present with mild symptoms and may have rapid deterioration after several days of illness, we would like to remind healthcare workers to remain vigilant when encountering suspected patients in healthcare setting. Please advise them to seek medical advice in GOPCs or AEDs for management and testing. Besides, you are reminded to strictly adhere to appropriate infection prevention and control measures including carrying out temperature screening for patients/clients/visitors upon their arrival at your hospital/clinic. Those with fever or respiratory symptoms should be advised to wear a surgical mask. Please share the above messages with your colleagues/ staff working in your institution.

For the latest information on COVID-19, please visit <https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html>.

Thank you very much for your support.

Yours sincerely,



(Dr Kellie SO)  
for Director of Health