

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (55) in DH CDB/9/12/6/4 Pt.1

13 May 2020

Dear Medical Superintendent,

**A new cluster of local cases of COVID-19 and appeal to collect specimens
for COVID-19 testing under enhanced surveillance**

We write to inform you about a new cluster of locally-acquired cases of COVID-19 and urge you to remain vigilant. The cluster involved two cases confirmed on 13 May 2020. The first case affected a 66-year-old woman who lives in Lei Muk Shue Estate in Tsuen Wan. She had onset of cough, fever and malaise on 8 May. She had attended a General Out-patient Clinic on 11 May and submitted a deep throat saliva (DTS) specimen on 12 May which was tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. She did not travel outside Hong Kong during the incubation period.

Initial investigation by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) revealed that the places visited by her during the incubation period were mainly her home, her son's home at Tsuen Wan Market Street, and markets of her son's home. Her eight family members in the two homes did not report travel history. Among these eight close contacts identified through the CHP's contact tracing, seven were found to have mild respiratory symptoms/fever and were arranged to be admitted to hospital for investigation. Her five-year-old granddaughter is tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 today. The girl had onset of cough on 11 May. The CHP's investigation and contact tracing is ongoing.

According to the available investigation findings so far, the index is a locally acquired case with no apparent source identified or linkage to any known cases. This case signifies there is silent/subclinical local transmission going on in the community and the risk of major community outbreaks exists.



The spectrum of clinical manifestations of COVID-19 is wide. The symptoms include fever, malaise, dry cough and shortness of breath, nasal

congestion, headache, conjunctivitis, sore throat, diarrhoea, loss of taste or smell, skin rash or discoloration of fingers or toes. Some infected persons may remain asymptomatic or present with mild or non-specific symptoms only. To enhance the surveillance of COVID-19 in Hong Kong for early case detection, we urge private medical practitioners (PMPs) to collect DTS specimens from as many patients as possible. Specimens could be collected from patients with any symptom irrespective of the severity.

Please provide a specimen bottle and two specimen bags to suitable patients to save an early morning DTS or sputum. The specimen bottles and bags can be obtained from a private laboratory providing existing microbiology testing. Please fill in the request form of the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) of the CHP (available from: https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/test_request_form_public_health_laboratory_centre_dh2546.pdf) and give to the patients.

Submission of DTS specimens

The patients can send the specimen together with a completed laboratory form to one of the 13 collection clinics of DH by themselves or their friends/family members/relatives **on the same day of specimen collection** (9am to 1pm during weekdays and 9am to 11am on Saturday, Sunday and public holidays). Please refer to the website for the list of collection clinics (Chinese - https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/list_of_collection_points_tc.pdf; English - https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/list_of_collection_points_en.pdf).

In addition, GoGo Tech Limited ("GOGO VAN") and HK PICK-UP LIMITED ("Pickupp") provide door-to-door specimen collection service for patients of PMPs at a charge of \$100 to be paid by the patients. Patients can choose to use the service by contacting the service providers directly and making their own direct payment. Upon receipt of a request from the patients concerned, one of the two service providers will collect their specimen bottles from the address provided by the patients (except outlying islands and other remote areas) and send to either the 13 clinics or PHLSB. Your patients can refer to the information below for service subscriptions and enquiries:

	GOGO VAN	Pickupp
Service Subscription	www.gogovan.com.hk/covid-19-testing-en/	hk.pickupp.io/en/blog/COVID-19-sample
General Enquiry	5681 4989 (hotline)	hk@pickupp.io

Laboratory reports will normally be available on the next working day upon receipt of specimens by PHLSB and will be sent out by fax to the requesting private laboratories. The requesting doctor would be informed of cases with positive results. Please contact PHLSB (Tel: 2319 8360) if you have any enquiry.

Thank you again for your unfailing support in the prevention and control of communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'SK CHUANG', is positioned above the printed name.

(Dr. SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health