

## **Legislative Council Panel on Health Services**

### **Enhancing the exchange and co-operation mechanism for the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases between Hong Kong and Guangdong**

#### **Introduction**

This paper informs Members of the enhanced exchange and co-operation mechanism for the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases between Hong Kong and Guangdong affirmed at the Guangdong/Hong Kong Joint Conference held on 5 August 2003.

#### **Background**

2. To protect the health of people of the two places, there has been an established mechanism between the health departments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Guangdong Province for the regular exchange of information on designated infectious diseases and to monitor the trends of such diseases.

3. Early this year, there were outbreaks of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (“SARS”) in Guangdong, Hong Kong and other places around the world. Experts of Guangdong and Hong Kong held two meetings in April and reached consensus to implement a number of measures for the prevention and treatment of SARS. In May this year, the exchange mechanism between the two places was extended to include Macao. The three places reached consensus on the following at the May meeting : enhancing the notification mechanism for infectious diseases and point-to-point exchange between counterpart organizations; exploring the establishment of medical facilities for treatment of patients with infectious diseases; strengthening exchange of infection control and data analysis on clinical treatment of infectious diseases; enhancing exchange and notification of other infectious diseases and enhancing collaboration on scientific research and visits for experts and technical staff.

## **Latest Development**

4. In view of increased movements of people and goods among the three places and under the principle of “One Country, Two Systems” and the Basic Law, Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao agreed to enhance exchange and co-operation on the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases. The three places agreed to establish an expedient, regulated, and accurate notification mechanism on infectious diseases in order to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and protect the health of the general public. Under the Ministry of Health’s guiding principle of strengthening the exchange and co-operation mechanism on infectious diseases among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, the three places established point-to-point exchange between counterpart organisations, agreed on the means, mode of exchange, and protocols of the exchange mechanism. At the Guangdong/Hong Kong Joint Conference held on 5 August 2003, the agreement on enhancing the exchange and co-operation mechanism on the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases between the three places was affirmed. The parties agreed to streamline the notification procedure and to exchange information on new and emerging infectious diseases. The salient points of the consensus are as follows :-

### **I. Expand the scope of the notification mechanism of infectious diseases**

5. At the meeting held in May this year, Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao agreed to exchange information on 8 infectious diseases (see Annex 1). Under the new mechanism, the three places agreed to expand the scope of the notification mechanism to include statutory notifiable infectious diseases of the three places (see Annex 2, 3 and 4).

6. In addition, the three places may expand the list to cover infectious diseases of concern as and when necessary. The respective health departments of the three places will notify the other parties for reference at the same time when it reports on the epidemic situation to the relevant authority.

7. Notification of infectious diseases can be made either on a regular basis or as a matter of emergency. Regular notification is applicable to general information on notifiable infectious diseases which can be made every ten days or monthly. Emergency notification is applicable to emerging public health issues. For instance, if there is a massive number of infectious diseases cases, the party concerned will notify the

other parties immediately.

8. The notification details mentioned above include statistical data, development of the situation and measures taken.

## II. Emerging or new infectious diseases

9. In case of emergence of unidentifiable infectious diseases with a trend to spread, the respective health department will report to the relevant authority immediately and notify the health departments of the other two places at the same time so that they can get prepared. For instance, the Health Department of Guangdong Province will report the situation regarding new or unidentified infectious diseases to Ministry of Health immediately, and at the same time forward the relevant information to Hong Kong Department of Health. Similarly, Hong Kong Department of Health will notify the Health Department of Guangdong Province immediately in such circumstances. Wherever necessary, the two places will convene special meetings at once to work out measures to deal with the situation.

## III. Mechanism for exchange of information

10. The three places agreed to set up a point-to-point exchange mechanism for the exchange of information, for instance through facsimile, telephone etc. which will be followed-up by designated officials.

11. At the time of convening the Joint Conference, experts from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao held a two-day meeting (4-5 August 2003) in Macao to discuss the implementation details of the enhanced notification mechanism.

12. Members are invited to note the contents of this paper.

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## Annex 1

### Eight infectious diseases covered by the existing notification mechanism agreed by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao

1. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
2. AIDS
3. Cholera
4. Malaria
5. Tuberculosis
6. Japanese Encephalitis
7. Influenza
8. Dengue fever

**Statutory notifiable infectious diseases of Hong Kong**

1. Tuberculosis\*
2. Acute Poliomyelitis
3. Amoebic Dysentery
4. Bacillary Dysentery
5. Chickenpox
6. Cholera\*
7. Dengue Fever \*
8. Diphtheria
9. Food Poisoning
10. Legionnaires' Disease
11. Leprosy
12. Malaria\*
13. Measles
14. Meningococcal Infections
15. Mumps
16. Paratyphoid Fever
17. Plague
18. Rabies
19. Relapsing Fever
20. Rubella
21. Scarlet Fever
22. Tetanus
23. Typhoid Fever
24. Typhus
25. Viral Hepatitis
26. Whooping Cough
27. Yellow Fever
28. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome \*

\* These 5 infectious diseases are included in the 8 infectious diseases covered by the existing notification mechanism agreed by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

**Statutory notifiable infectious diseases of the Mainland**

1. Plague
2. Cholera\*
3. Viral Hepatitis
4. Dysentery : Bacillary Dysentery and Amebic Dysentery
5. Typhoid Fever and Paratyphoid Fever
6. HIV/AIDS\*
7. Gonorrhoea
8. Syphilis
9. Poliomyelitis
10. Measles
11. Whooping Cough
12. Diphtheria
13. Epidemic Cerebrospinal Meningitis
14. Scarlet Fever
15. Epidemic Hemorrhagic Fever (EHF)
16. Rabies
17. Leptospirosis
18. Brucellosis
19. Anthrax
20. Typhus
21. Epidemic Encephalitis B\*
22. Kala-Azar
23. Malaria\*
24. Dengue Fever\*
25. Neonatal Tetanus
26. Tuberculosis of Lungs\*
27. Infectious Atypical Pneumonia (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome)\*

\* These 7 infectious diseases are included in the 8 infectious diseases covered by the existing notification mechanism agreed by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.

**Statutory notifiable infectious diseases of Macao**

1. Cholera\*
2. Typhoid Fever and Paratyphoid Fever
3. Other Salmonella Infection (excluding Typhoid Fever and Paratyphoid Fever)
4. Shigellosis (including Bacillary Dysentery)
5. Intestinal E. Coli Infections
6. Bacterial Food Intoxication (including staphylococcal and botulism poisoning, excluding Typhoid Fever, Paratyphoid Fever, other Salmonella Infection, Shigellosis and Intestinal E. Coli Infections)
7. Amoebiasis (including Acute Amoebic Dysentery)
8. Tuberculosis (all types)\*
9. Plauge
10. Leprosy
11. Tetanus (all types)
12. Diphtheria
13. Whooping Cough
14. Scarlet Fever
15. Meningococcal Infections (with or without Meningitis)
16. Legionnaires' Disease
17. H. Influenzae Infection (with or without Meningitis)
18. Syphilis
19. Gonococcal Infections
20. Lymphogranuloma Venereum
21. Other STD (excluding Syphilis, Gonococcal Infections, Lymphogranuloma Venereum and HIV Diseases)
22. Trachoma
23. Acute Poliomyelitis
24. Rabies
25. Dengue Fever (including Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever)\*
26. Yellow Fever
27. Varicella (Chickenpox)
28. Measles
29. Rubella (German Measles) (all types)
30. Viral Hepatitis (all types)
31. HIV Diseases (including Asymptomatic HIV Infection and AIDS)\*
32. Mumps
33. Malaria (all types)\*

\* These 5 infectious diseases are included in the 8 infectious diseases covered by the existing notification mechanism agreed by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao.