

Date of Meeting: 9 January 2006

Members' request: provide information on the time required for the Mainland side to notify Hong Kong of each confirmed case of infectious disease occurred in the Mainland in recent years

Hong Kong has been maintaining close liaison with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Guangdong Provincial Department of Health regarding (i) mutual reporting of infectious diseases and (ii) request for verification and details of infectious disease incidents reported by media.

For 2005, there were about 30 communications between MoH and Hong Kong on cases of infectious diseases. For most of these cases, the time interval between Hong Kong making a request for information and MoH's initial response was usually within 24 hours. For cases where more time and effort were required to gather relevant facts and details, such supplemental information would usually be provided within one week whereas reports of some ongoing investigations might take two to four weeks. Separately, Hong Kong would usually receive formal reports on the same day as MoH sent confirmatory reports to the World Health Organisation.

For 2005, there were about 25 communications between the Guangdong Provincial Department of Health and Hong Kong regarding infectious diseases. Similar to the case with MoH, the time taken for Hong Kong to receive information requested was usually within 24 hours.

Members' request: provide a note on the progress made in using Chinese and western medicines in treating patients suffering from infectious diseases

The Department of Health (DH) and the Hospital Authority (HA) have been working closely with the Chinese medicine profession in the prevention of influenza. DH issues letters and organises forums or seminars from time to time to keep the Chinese medicine profession informed of the relevant preventive measures taken by the Government against influenza.

Apart from attending a seminar organised by the DH on the common methods of prevention and treatment of Influenza with Chinese medicine in March and April 2005, the HA invited the professors at Guangdong Provincial Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine to provide expert advice on the subject. The HA also would make reference to the latest research literature on the treatment of

Influenza with Chinese medicine, with a view to exploring further the feasibility of integrating the use of Chinese and Western medicine for the treatment of Avian Influenza. In this connection, the HA has established a Working Group on the Research of Prevention and Treatment of Avian Influenza, which comprises members of Chinese and western medical practitioners. The main responsibility of the Working Group is to discuss the relevant dialectical theories, treatment stages and treatment protocol, and to explore the feasibility of conducting relevant research on drug-herb interaction.

In December 2005, DH issued “Treatment and Prevention of Influenza – Guideline for Chinese Medicine Practitioners” to provide guidelines on diagnosis and treatment of influenza based on Chinese medicine theories and on patient referral. To tap on the experience in the use of Chinese medicine against influenza, DH, in conjunction with HA, local universities and Chinese medicine groups set up a working group in December 2005 to develop reference document regarding influenza treatment and prevention guideline.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
June 2006