



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

Our Ref. : FHB/H/16/123/9
Your Ref. :

Tel. No. : 3509 8931
Fax No. : 2526 3753

16 October 2020

Ms Angel SHEK
Legislative Council Finance Committee Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road, Central
Hong Kong

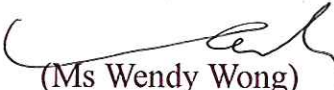
Dear Ms Shek,

**Legislative Council
Finance Committee Item FCR(2020-21)71**

Follow-up on “Anti-epidemic Fund”

We refer to your email of 30 September 2020 on the subject matter to the Financial Services and Treasury Bureau. The reply from Food and Health Bureau is at **Annex** for members' reference.

Yours sincerely,


(Ms Wendy Wong)
for Secretary for Food and Health

**Reply of Food and Health Bureau to follow-up issues
at the Legislative Council Finance Committee Meeting
on 28 September 2020**

FCR(2020-21)71

- (a) **Please give an estimate on the public demand for COVID-19 nucleic tests based on the different operational levels of border control points in Hong Kong, as well as the supply of such tests (including both the public and private healthcare sectors);**

The COVID-19 testing capacity in Hong Kong has been enhanced significantly in the past two months. With the commissioning of the DH's laboratory in the Hong Kong Children's Hospital and the new laboratories of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Hong Kong in late July and early September 2020 respectively, the testing volume that can be handled by public testing services on a regular basis has increased from about 3 600 per day in late June to the current level of over 7 000 per day. The testing volume of local private laboratories has also increased from around 4 000 per day in late June to tens of thousands at present. The public sector will procure testing services from private laboratories when necessary to further enhance public testing capacity. Public testing service mainly serves for DH and HA to conduct tests for epidemiological surveillance and investigation. If members of the public need to take a COVID-19 test for personal reasons in order to obtain a relevant test result for private use, including immigration purposes, they should separately arrange testing services on their own with private laboratories.

- (b) **Members opined that the Government should use/recover the following fund/remaining fund to enhance the resources for anti-epidemic efforts. The Government was requested to respond and provide information about the fund/remaining fund:**

(i) In the past 5 years, the amount of fees defaulted by users of various services provided by government departments and the Hospital Authority

Outstanding payment from persons receiving services of the Hospital Authority (HA) in the past five years is summarised in the table below:

| Year (as at 31 March) | Outstanding payment (\$ million) |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 2019 | 110 |
| 2018* | 107 |
| 2017 | 95 |
| 2016 | 99 |
| 2015 | 81 |

* Fees and charges for public healthcare services has been revised with effect from 18 June 2017.

HA has an established mechanism to minimise default on payment of medical fees. HA would issue interim bills to patients periodically and remind them to settle the bills during their hospitalisation. Upon discharge from hospital, final bills are issued to patients or mailed to their Hong Kong or overseas addresses provided at registration. If the bills remain outstanding after the patients' discharge, patients or their families will be reminded through telephone calls for settlement of bills. Monthly statements will also be mailed to their Hong Kong or overseas addresses provided at registration. HA will impose administrative charges on patients who have failed to settle the bills within a specified period. If the bills remain outstanding after the above actions being taken, HA will institute legal actions as appropriate, including filing claims with the Small Claims Tribunal or issuing demand letters to the patients concerned through lawyers to recover the outstanding payment from the patients concerned.