

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1516/19-20
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/HS

Panel on Health Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Friday, 8 May 2020, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

- Members present** : Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Hoi-yan (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP
Hon SHIU Ka-chun
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon KWONG Chun-yu
- Members attending** : Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP
- Members absent** : Hon CHAN Kin-por, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP

Public Officers : Item III
attending

Prof Sophia CHAN Siu-chee, JP
Secretary for Food and Health

Ms Leonie LEE Hoi-lun
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Health)1
Food and Health Bureau

Dr WONG Ka-hing, JP
Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health

Dr K L CHUNG
Director (Quality & Safety)
Hospital Authority

Dr Ian CHEUNG
Chief Manager (Cluster Performance)
Hospital Authority

Ms Leona LAW Ka-wing
Principal Assistant Secretary for Commerce and Economic
Development (Commerce & Industry)2
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau

Ms Cynthia CHAN
Principal Education Officer (Special Duties)
Education Bureau

Mr Alex WONG Kwok-chun
Assistant Director (Subventions)
Social Welfare Department

Clerk in : Ms Maisie LAM
attendance : Chief Council Secretary (2) 5

Staff in : Miss Kay CHU
attendance : Senior Council Secretary (2) 5

Mr Ronald LAU
Council Secretary (2) 5

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 5

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I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

Members noted that no information paper had been issued since the last meeting.

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)934/19-20(01) and (02)]

2. Members agreed to discuss the subject "Genomic medicine" at the next regular meeting of the Panel scheduled for 12 June 2020 at 10:45 am.

3. Referring to Ms Elizabeth QUAT's suggestion made at the last meeting of the Panel on 24 April 2020 that the Administration should revert to the Panel in the May regular meeting on the findings of the commissioned study conducted by The University of Hong Kong on the risk factors associated with breast cancer for local women, the Chairman informed members that the Administration had indicated that it was not in a position to revert to the Panel on the subject at this meeting. The Clerk would follow up with the Administration as to whether it could revert to the Panel on the subject in the June regular meeting.

(Post meeting note: With the concurrence of the Chairman and the Administration, a new discussion item "Prevention of osteoporosis" has been added to the agenda for the above meeting. The item was originally scheduled for discussion at the meeting on 14 February 2020 which had subsequently been cancelled due to the situation of coronavirus disease 2019 ("COVID-19"). On the instruction of the Chairman, relevant deputations have been invited to make oral representations to the Panel under the agenda item.)

III. Measures for the prevention and control of Coronavirus disease 2019 in Hong Kong

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)820/19-20(01), CB(2)856/19-20(01), CB(2)887/19-20(01) and CB(2)934/19-20(03) to (05)]

4. The Chairman informed members that pursuant to the discussion at the last Panel meeting, the Administration had been requested to provide

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information on the following issues in its paper on the subject under discussion (LC Paper No. CB(2)934/19-20(03)):

- (a) enforcement of the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirement and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) and the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) as raised by Mr CHAN Chi-chuen;
- (b) adjustments made by the Hospital Authority ("HA") in relation to its non-emergency and non-essential medical services under the activation of Emergency Response Level in public hospitals as raised by Dr KWOK Ka-ki; and
- (c) follow-up actions taken by HA on the impact on public hospital services caused by the industrial action staged by some of its staff in early February 2020 as raised by Mrs Regina IP.

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Food and Health ("SFH") briefed members on the latest situation and measures being taken by the Administration to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19 in Hong Kong, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper.

6. Members noted the following papers on the subject under discussion:

- (a) letter dated 15 April 2020 from Dr KWOK Ka-ki and the Administration's response to the letter (LC Paper Nos. CB(2)820/19-20(01) and CB(2)856/19-20(01));
- (b) letter dated 28 April 2020 from Mrs Regina IP (LC Paper No. CB(2)887/19-20(01));
- (c) letter dated 7 May 2020 from Dr Pierre CHAN (LC Paper No. CB(2)934/19-20(05)); and
- (d) updated background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(2)934/19-20(03)).

Immigration control measures and quarantine arrangements

7. Referring to the arrangement under the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C) that the Chief Secretary for Administration might designate any person or category of persons to be exempted from the 14-day quarantine requirements if

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certain criteria were satisfied, Mr Michael TIEN was concerned about the categories of persons eligible for the exemption. In his view, all exempted persons should be required to have a valid negative test for COVID-19 within, say, three or seven days prior to arrival in Hong Kong, in order to safeguard public health.

8. Dr Pierre CHAN remarked that the current relatively stable situation of COVID-19 in Hong Kong was a result of the concerted efforts of all Hong Kong residents. In his view, to achieve success in combating an epidemic would require the public being self-disciplined to wear surgical masks, maintain personal and environmental hygiene and maintain social distancing; having adequate hospital beds and viral tests; and putting in place stringent immigration control measures with enhanced surveillance. On the third factor, he considered that crew members of aircraft, good vessels and passenger ships arriving at Hong Kong, who were currently exempted from compulsory quarantine, should be required to undergo viral test for COVID-19 to reduce public health risk. The Chairman shared the concern of Dr Pierre CHAN.

9. SFH advised that exemption arrangement for various categories of persons would be hammered out by the relevant bureaux for consideration of the Chief Secretary for Administration as and when appropriate. After returning to Hong Kong, the exempted persons would be subject to medical surveillance arranged by the Department of Health ("DH") for a period of 14 days.

10. Mr YIU Si-wing said that with the easing of the epidemic situation in Hong Kong and neighbouring places including Macao, Shenzhen and Zhuhai which recorded no local confirmed cases for 14, 29, 30 and 40 days respectively, it was an opportune time for the Administration to take into account the local economic consideration and examine the feasibility of bilateral arrangement of relaxation of certain types of travel between Hong Kong and these places to a certain extent (i.e. the "travel bubble" concept). Pointing out that there was a variation of the epidemic situation in different places, Mr POON Siu-ping shared Mr YIU Si-wing's view. Pointing out that those Hong Kong manufacturers with factories in the Mainland had genuine need to travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland to support the operation and business of the factories, Mr CHAN Han-pan urged the Administration to explore with the relevant Mainland authorities on the feasibility of relaxing the 14-day compulsory quarantine requirements imposed on travellers from Hong Kong to a certain extent. The Chairman expressed a similar view. Noting that imported cases were identified from time to time, Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that there was a need to

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maintain stringent immigration control and quarantine arrangements to prevent the epidemic from turning back.

11. SFH advised that the Administration had adopted a "suppress and lift" strategy for striking an appropriate balance between the three aspects of public health, economic development and daily operation of society. It was actively discussing with the relevant Mainland and Macao authorities on the quarantine arrangements and mutual recognition of virus testing results under the framework of joint prevent and control of the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, DH and the Macao Health Bureau. At present, all asymptomatic inbound travellers arriving at Hong Kong by air had to undergo virus tests at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre set up by DH at AsiaWorld-Expo and wait for the test results there or at the DH Holding Centre for Test Results set up in a hotel. Those who were tested negative had to continue to complete the 14-day compulsory home quarantine.

Quarantine facilities

12. Mr POON Siu-ping sought information about the latest provision of quarantine facilities. SFH advised that there were currently four quarantine centres, namely the Lei Yue Mun Park and Holiday Village in Chai Wan, the Heritage Lodge at the Jao Tsung-I Academy, Chun Yeung Estate at Fo Tan, and the Junior Police Call Permanent Activity Centre at Pat Heung. The Administration would continue to construct quarantine units at the Sai Kung Outdoor Recreation Centre and two sites at Penny's Bay.

13. Ms CHAN Hoi-yan urged the Administration to set out the timetable for ceasing the use of Chun Yeung Estate as quarantine centre to enable the prospective tenants of the Estate to plan ahead their arrangements for moving in. Mr WU Chi-wai expressed a similar view.

14. SFH assured members that the Administration would keep in view the development of the epidemic situation as well as the supply of and demand for additional quarantine units and cease the use of Chun Yeung Estate as quarantine centre as soon as possible. To speed up the pace in this regard, Mr WU Chi-wai called on the Administration to explore the feasibility of using hotels, such as that in the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort which was partly owned by the Government, as quarantine centres. SFH advised that DH and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department had examined the issue, but it involved consideration from various aspects. Specifically, facilities for use as quarantine centres had to fulfil a number of infection control requirements which hotels might not be able to meet with. Mr WU Chi-wai requested the Administration to advise

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in writing as to whether the Administration had approached the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort in this regard, and if so, the outcome of discussion and the key consideration behind.

15. Dr Helena WONG relayed the concern of those Hong Kong residents returned from Pakistan who were subject to 14-day compulsory quarantine at Chun Yeung Estate about the poor environmental hygiene, the lack of meal that suited their religious practice of avoiding pork and the inadequacy of fans to maintain ventilation under the hot weather. SFH assured members that all quarantine units would be cleaned and disinfected after use. Confinees with special dietary requirements or other needs could call the centre's hotline where necessary.

Social distancing measures

16. Mr Tommy CHEUNG remarked that apart from having the entire community remained vigilant and the healthcare workers stayed committed to their duties, various industries had also shown understanding and were ready to cooperate to fight the virus together. He noted that an arrangement under the latest directions issued by SFH in accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation was that bars and pubs were allowed to resume operation from 8 May 2020 onwards subject to certain conditions whereas karaoke establishments had to remain closed until 21 May 2020. He sought clarification as to whether those latter premises which were operated as karaoke establishments and catering businesses before closure could continue their catering business if all karaoke operation and services were suspended.

17. SFH advised that in accordance with the latest directions, four scheduled premises, namely bathhouse, party room, club or night club and karaoke establishment, were required to remain closed until 21 May 2020. These scheduled premises might still operate other licensed business(es) which was/were not required to be suspended if the premises were operating more than one licensed business before the closure, and the operators had implemented all measures to effectively stop or avoid operation of business(es) and offering services which were required to be suspended. For instance, premises that were originally operated as karaoke establishment and catering business might continue their catering business in accordance with the relevant directions if all karaoke operation and services were suspended; relevant facilities, installations and equipment for karaoke activities were closed or properly sealed off; and notices were posted in prominent locations at the entrance(s) clearly indicating that only catering services but no karaoke services were provided in the premises.

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18. Mr SHIU Ka-fai noted that bathhouses were required to remain closed until 21 May 2020 under the latest directions, whereas massage establishments were allowed to resume operation subject to certain conditions. He queried whether bathhouses could be allowed to provide massage services if the steam and sauna facilities, which were considered as having a risk of spreading the virus, were closed. SFH advised that advice from the Department of Justice ("DoJ") in this regard would be sought.

19. Mr SHIU Ka-fai was concerned that while fitness centres were allowed to resume operation with effect from 8 May 2020 subject to certain conditions, they could hardly sustain their operation under the requirement that not more than eight persons were allowed in each group training or class including the coach. He considered it unjustifiable that in the case that the training venue had a large floor area that could accommodate tens of persons who were divided into small groups of not more than eight persons each and there was a distance of not less than 1.5 m between each small group, there was still a need for each group to conduct different types of activity but not the same type of activity. The Chairman held a similar view. SFH advised that the Home Affairs Bureau had maintained communication with the industry on the issue. Views from DoJ would be sought to see whether any clarifications in this regard had to be made.

20. Mr YIU Si-wing enquired about the circumstances under which the Administration would decide to lift the social distancing measures completely to allow the gradual resumption of social activities and facilitate local consumption. Raising a similar question, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen remarked that members of the public might get confused by the relaxation of some of the social distancing measures amid the ongoing broadcast of CHP's publicity message that the public should avoid eating out or going out if it was not necessary and keep social distancing to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. SFH advised that some of the social distancing measures had already been relaxed with effect from 8 May 2020. The Administration would continue to closely monitor the epidemic situation and review the various measures in place with a view to suitably adjusting them taking into account all relevant factors.

21. Holding the view that the easing situation of the epidemic was mainly attributable to the concerted efforts of members of the public and various sectors, Mr CHAN Han-pan urged the Administration to take follow-up actions seriously concerning the case whereby Ms Tanya CHAN had participated in a group gathering of some 40 persons in a bar having its metal gate closed by half on 2 April 2020 when the prohibition of group gatherings with more than four persons in public place were in force. SFH

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advised that since the case had already entered legal proceedings, it was not appropriate for her to comment on the case. As for the enforcement actions taken under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation, enforcement departments had so far carried out about 73 000 inspections, gave some 11 000 verbal warnings, issued 477 fixed penalty tickets and instituted 15 prosecutions.

22. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen held the view that there were cases whereby individual enforcement departments had made use of the prohibition of group gathering in public place to clamp people's freedoms. He urged the Administration to ensure that enforcement action would only be taken if a person ignored repeated reminders or broke the law. Mr CHU Hoi-dick queried about the rationale for the Police to disperse members of the public who sung at the same time in shopping malls even they were in small groups and there was a distance of not less than 1.5 m between each small group. He was concerned about whether having a common purpose was the sole factor for determining whether a gathering was a "dispersable gathering" under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation. SFH advised that a group gathering generally meant a group of people who gathered for a common purpose.

23. Mr Tommy CHEUNG called on the Administration to exempt group gatherings at catering premises as long as they had complied with the requirements set out in the directions issued under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation such that banquet of a larger scale could be held to facilitate the recovery of the local economy. SFH took note of the suggestion and added that the Administration would take into account all relevant factors to see if there was any room for adjustments in this regard.

Response measures of HA

24. Noting that 943 COVID-19 patients had been discharged from public hospitals as at 7 May 2020, Mr POON Siu-ping sought information about the medical treatment received by these patients. The Chairman queried about the effectiveness of the use of convalescent plasma donated by patients who had recovered from COVID-19 for treating other COVID-19 patients. Director (Quality & Safety), HA ("D(Q&S), HA") advised that infectious disease experts of HA had worked out the clinical management guidelines for treatment of COVID-19 patients. Depending on the clinical conditions of patients, specific anti-viral therapy such as protease inhibitors, interferon and ribavirin would be provided for symptomatic and severe patients. Separately, some 30 patients had been provided with Remdesivir under clinical trial setting. The above apart, HA had started using the

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convalescent plasma donated by recovered patients who had attained the prescribed level of neutralization antibody titre for the clinical purpose of treating other patients. Preliminary data showed that the result of convalescent plasma treatment was satisfactory.

25. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry about HA's existing stockpile of personal protective equipment ("PPE") for frontline healthcare personnel, D(Q&S), HA advised that as at 8 May 2020, HA maintained a stockpile of about 26 million surgical masks, 3.4 million isolation gowns, 4.7 million face shields and 2.3 million N95 respirators. Supply of all PPEs had become more stable, except for N95 respirators, in particular the small-sized ones. HA would continue to explore alternatives, such as locally produced N95 respirators, in this regard.

26. Prof Joseph LEE sought clarification on whether HA's allied health staff working in laboratories and frontline civil servants engaging in high risk duties were entitled to the Special Emergency Response Allowance. D(Q&S), HA advised that HA's staff who were mainly engaged in COVID-19-related high risk duties would be eligible for the Allowance. A hotline (5275 7500) had been set up by the Human Resources Division to answer enquiries from staff in this regard.

27. Ms CHAN Hoi-yan was concerned that the suspension of visiting arrangements was still in force in all public hospitals under the Emergency Response Level which was activated in late January 2020 in line with the activation of the Emergency Response Level under the Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance. Taking into account that the situation in Hong Kong was relatively stable in terms of the number of local confirmed cases and that COVID-19 patients were mainly admitted to 15 out of the 43 public hospitals, she considered that visiting arrangements could be resumed gradually. Dr Helena WONG asked about the circumstances under which the visiting arrangements of public hospitals could be resumed.

28. D(Q&S), HA advised that at present, compassionate arrangement would be made for paediatric patients or patients with terminal illness. In view of the easing of the local epidemic situation, HA was examining the arrangement of allowing visiting by registered visitors with restrictions in the number of visitors and duration of visit. Priority would be accorded to non-acute hospitals. The Chairman and Dr Helena WONG urged HA to expedite its work in this regard.

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Support for persons recovered from COVID-19

29. Prof Joseph LEE urged the Administration to provide financial and psychological support for persons recovered from COVID-19. He noted that the Administration had set up a trust fund in 2003 to provide support for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome patients and their families. SFH advised that the Kwai Tsing District Health Centre and HA would jointly provide multi-disciplinary post-discharge support for patients who had recovered from COVID-19 which would cover, among others, pathology explanation, infection control, cardiopulmonary rehabilitation, emotional support, post-recovery nutritional supplement, anti-epidemic drug consultation and restructuring of lifestyle. In addition, the Special Chinese Medicine Outpatient Programme was launched on 24 April 2020 to provide discharged COVID-19 patients with, among others, a maximum of 10 free Chinese medicine general consultations at the Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research within six months from the discharge date. D(Q&S), HA supplemented that HA had all along been providing discharged patients with medical and psychological support. Medical social workers would also follow up with patients who required financial assistance.

30. The Chairman expressed concern that some discharged COVID-19 patients were retested positive after returning to the community. Ms CHAN Hoi-yan noted that COVID-19 inpatients with two clinical specimens tested negative for the COVID-19 nucleic acid test would be allowed to be discharged. She considered that the interval between the collection of the two clinical specimens had to be long enough to ensure that patients so discharged had recovered.

31. D(Q&S), HA advised that if discharged patients developed symptoms again, attending medical staff would arrange viral testing based on clinical assessment. In most cases, the situation whereby recovered discharged patients were retested positive was due to the prolonged viral ribonucleic acid ("RNA") shedding in the body of the patients. Current evidence did not support correlation of prolonged viral RNA shedding with infectivity. Under the existing discharge guidelines, the collection of the two clinical specimens for COVID-19 nucleic acid test had to be taken at least 24 hours apart. Separately, on the recommendations of the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases under CHP, HA was considering the inclusion of factors such as positive test result for antibody of the virus and, for symptomatic patients, the number of days passed since the onset of illness into the discharge criteria for confirmed patients of COVID-19.

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Emotional support for elderly under the epidemic

32. Mr SHIU Ka-chun said that a study of the Senior Citizen Home Safety Association which covered about 20 000 elderly respondents revealed that cases in need of emotional support had increased by 70% and one-third of them required emotional counselling services. He asked whether the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") had studied the number of elders, in particular those who were singletons, in need of emotional support as a result of the partial suspension of the subsidized home-based and community-based services since late January 2020 due to the epidemic.

33. Assistant Director (Subventions), SWD ("AD(S), SWD") advised that while the home-based and community-based services for elders and persons with disabilities had been scaled down or suspended due to the epidemic, SWD had maintained the provision of clinical psychology services and certain home care services, such as meal, escort, nursing and administration of medicine services. Persons in need of clinical psychology services could contact the Integrated Family Services Centre or medical social services unit. From 8 April 2020 onwards, the support teams had also been providing cleaning, acquiring basic necessities, and other special and emergency services for those in need.

34. Mr SHIU Ka-chun was concerned about whether frontline workers providing the above services had been provided with surgical masks, isolation gowns, goggles, medical gloves and shoe covers. AD(S), SWD advised that SWD had collated views from the welfare sector and was seeking the advice from DH on the provision of PPE to frontline workers to prepare for the resumption of full-range services in an orderly manner.

Personal and environmental hygiene

35. Holding the view that the lifting of some of the social distancing measures might increase public health risk, Mr Michael TIEN said that he had publicly urged the Administration to make reference to practices adopted by Czech, Austria and Germany to require persons to wear a mask at all times when taking public transport, participating in religious activities and shopping. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen held a similar view. Ms CHAN Hoi-yan called on the Administration to step up public education on the importance of wearing surgical masks and keeping hand hygiene which had demonstrated effectiveness to prevent and control the spread of communicable diseases such as influenza and hand foot and mouth disease. Holding the view that the Administration should continue to encourage members of the public to wear masks for personal protection, Dr Fernando CHEUNG remarked that persons with special needs, such as frail elders and persons

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with disabilities in need of residential care services, should be provided with face shields.

36. SFH advised that in the light of the more stabilized situation in Hong Kong in terms of the number of confirmed cases, some of the social distancing measures were lifted at the moment. For those in relation to catering business and scheduled premises, it should be noted that certain public health requirements were still in force. These included the mask on requirement (with exception for specified circumstances such as when consuming food or drinks). Given that it was observed that so far more than 90% of members of the public would wear mask, the Administration did not see the need to introduce legislation at this stage.

37. Dr Pierre CHAN considered that the Food and Health Bureau ("FHB") had a responsibility to provide advice from the public health perspective on the usage of the reusable CuMask+™ to be distributed by the Administration to Hong Kong residents for free. He queried how a used CuMask+™ that was contaminated with virus for COVID-19 could be sanitized. Mr SHIU Ka-chun highlighted the advice of Dr HO Pak-leung, President of Carol Yu Centre for Infection of The University of Hong Kong that CuMask+™ was not suitable for visitors of high-risk venues such as hospitals, clinics and residential care homes for the elderly; people with fever and/or upper respiratory symptoms; people undergoing home quarantine as well as confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19; and close contacts of confirmed cases. Mr KWONG Chun-yu was concerned about the effectiveness of CuMask+™ in protecting the user against virus after several washes. Ms CHAN Hoi-yan remarked that both surgical mask and CuMask+™ might be contaminated by germs in the course of use, it was therefore of utmost importance to perform hand hygiene before and after touching the mask.

38. The Chairman informed members that the Panel had invited via FHB representatives from the Innovation and Technology Bureau to attend this meeting but to no avail. SFH advised that according to the Innovation and Technology Bureau, CuMask+™ was a six-layer mask with special ergonomic features, and some layers containing copper which was capable of immobilizing bacteria, common viruses and other harmful substances. The mask complied with the American Society for Testing and Materials F2100 Level 1 Standard in terms of particle filtration efficiency, bacterial filtration efficiency, resistance to penetration by synthetic blood, flammability and pressure resistance, and was reusable for up to 60 washes. It should be noted that CuMask+™ was for general protection but not for medical use.

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39. Expressing grave concern over the outbreak of COVID-19 in some residential care homes in some overseas places, Dr Fernando CHEUNG urged the Administration to continue to put in place stringent anti-epidemic measures in residential care homes for elderly and persons with disabilities. He was particularly concerned about the crowding situation of some private residential care homes. SFH advised that CHP had issued letters to these residential care units to advise them the precautionary measures to guard against the disease. In addition, DH and SWD had discussed the response plan for possible outbreak of COVID-19 in residential care homes.

[At 12:37 pm, the Chairman informed members of her decision to extend the meeting for not more than 15 minutes.]

40. Noting that all changing rooms and shower facilities in venues of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department were closed due to the epidemic, Mr SHIU Ka-chun expressed concern that it was difficult for the 1 270-odd street sleepers to maintain their personal hygiene especially in hot weather. SFH advised that the Leisure and Cultural Services Department was working on the reopening of its venues and facilities. She would relay the above concern to the Department for consideration.

Class resumption arrangements

41. Noting that cross-boundary students would be exempted from the compulsory quarantine requirement when class resumed, Prof Joseph LEE queried about the public health measures to be put in place by the Administration to ensure that the arrangement would not increase the health risk of the students and the communities of the two places. SFH advised that the Education Bureau ("EDB") was in discussion with the various departments of the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government and DH on the class resumption arrangements for cross-boundary students.

42. Mr SHIU Ka-fai was concerned about when private tutorial schools could resume operation. Mr POON Siu-ping asked whether there was any contingency plan for possible outbreak of COVID-19 in the school setting upon class resumption. Principal Education Officer (Special Duties), EDB advised that EDB had requested schools to enhance the cleansing and disinfection of the school premises according to CHP's guidelines, and immediately report to CHP if any staff were diagnosed with COVID-19 or were classified as close contacts of confirmed cases that needed to be subject to quarantine or medical surveillance. CHP would then advise on whether class suspension or other measures should be taken by the schools concerned.

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Prescription of COVID-19 as an occupational disease

43. Prof Joseph LEE urged the Administration not to drag its feet in prescribing COVID-19 as an occupational disease under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (Cap. 282). SFH advised that the issue was being examined by the Labour and Welfare Bureau.

Anti-epidemic Fund

44. Dr Helena WONG said that she had earlier written to SFH and Director the Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene Department to relay the concern of those operators of catering outlets who were the employers but not the food licence holders of the premises concerned, and hence, were ineligible to apply for the one-off subsidy under the Catering Business (Social Distancing) Subsidy Scheme under the Anti-epidemic Fund but to no avail. SFH undertook to follow up the matter after the meeting.

45. Mr SHIU Ka-fai noted that under the Subsidy Scheme for Beauty Parlours, Massage Establishments and Party Rooms under the second-round of Anti-epidemic Fund, each eligible beauty parlour would receive a one-off tiered subsidy of \$30,000, \$60,000 and \$100,000, depending on its number of workers as shown on the employer's Mandatory Provident Fund remittance statement. Given that some beauty parlours would engage self-employed persons, who were not employees of the company concerned, to provide services, he suggested that the floor area of the premises should also be a factor for determining the amount of subsidy. SFH undertook to relay the suggestion to the office of the Chief Secretary for Administration for consideration.

46. In response to Mr KWONG Chun-yu's enquiry about whether there would be another round of Anti-epidemic Fund, SFH advised that the Administration would first focus its efforts on the implementation of various financial relief measures under the second round of the Fund.

IV. Any other business

47. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:51 pm.