



HKSH Continues Caring for Patients amid COVID-19 Screening Test Available for Public

(30 March 2020, Hong Kong) HKSH Medical Group has reiterated its commitment to guarding the medical battlefield in Hong Kong by providing uninterrupted services to patients in need and introducing COVID-19 screening tests and first-ever tele-consultation for patients in need, to safeguard the safety of patients, staff and the community as a whole.

Lessons learnt from SARS 17 years ago and the meticulous preparation for another major outbreak since then, including building up an infection control team as well as investing in isolation wards and the Molecular Pathology Laboratory, has made HKSH's rapid response possible, said Mr. Wyman LI, Chief Operating Officer of HKSH Medical Group.

“With experience learned from SARS, we are more prepared. The Hospital has substantially increased its capability in microbiology and molecular pathology. We also have equipped ourselves with 16 isolation rooms including two airborne isolation rooms,” continued Mr. LI, who was speaking at a press briefing on 19 March.

With a state-of-the-art Molecular Pathology Laboratory, HKSH is able to be among the first private hospitals in Hong Kong to provide COVID-19 screening tests to the public. Over 1,500 tests have been conducted by end-March with four preliminary confirmed cases identified and transferred to the Hospital Authority (HA) through liaison with the medical control officer of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP).

Preparation began back in mid-January, with COVID-19 screening tests being first introduced for screening in-patients in early February and extended to out-patients concerned about the risk in early March. The testing capacity of HKSH has now ramped up to 100 tests a day.

“While HKSH is required to report patients according to the corresponding notification requirements from the CHP Guidelines, we will continue to take care of non-COVID-19 patients with such medical conditions as fever and respiratory diseases,” added Dr. Joseph CHAN, Chief Medical Officer of HKSH Medical Group-cum-Deputy Medical Superintendent of Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital.

“Patients out there need our help and cannot afford delayed treatment, such as cancer patients, pregnant mothers, and patients with acute needs for medical and surgical attention. HKSH has taken stringent infection control measures to ensure that our patients can receive care in a safe environment.”

“The provision of COVID-19 test is an important line of defence. Patients with a preliminary positive result will be screened out and transferred to the public hospitals for treatment, whilst patients with a negative result will continue to receive medical care and procedures needed. This has helped keep the Hospital and patients safe. Up till now, not a single patient, visitor or staff member has been infected in the Hospital,” Dr. CHAN noted.



HKSH offers two COVID-19 screening tests for patients and employs the technique of Real-time Quantitative Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) to find out if the patient's specimen contains the virus. Nasopharyngeal Swab (NPS) pooled with Throat Swab (TS) is mainly used for pre-admission checks for in-patients, whereas Deep Throat Saliva is mainly targeted for out-patients.

“Depending on the time of specimen collection, screening results can be made available within 6 to 24 hours,” said Dr. Edmond MA, Director of Clinical Pathology & Molecular Pathology Division of Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital.

HKSH has also put a strong emphasis on protecting medical personnel in the battle against COVID-19. Dr. Raymond YUNG, Deputy Medical Superintendent cum Infection Control Officer of the Hospital who heads the COVID-19 Rapid Response Taskgroup formed in early January, said that all efforts have been made to ensure adequate supply of personal protective equipment, such as face masks and eye shields, for frontline and supporting staff.

“On the other hand, patient safety is also ensured through stringent guidelines to doctors and staff on their travel and contact history,” explained Dr. YUNG.

Meanwhile, HKSH is committed to raising public awareness with a series of COVID-19 educational videos on YouTube launched since mid-February. Topics range from specimen collection methods for COVID-19 screening tests, messages for mothers-to-be and cancer patients, skin care during COVID-19, food storage options to smart tips on hiking, one of the most favourite activities during the pandemic.

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HKSH Medical Group

Officially launched in September 2017, promotes public health and advanced medicine through a multi-faceted, coordinated approach in clinical services, medical education, scientific research and public health education. Members of the Group, including Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital, HKSH Healthcare and HKSH Eastern Medical Centre, are dedicated to offering top-quality holistic care to patients, upholding the motto “Quality in Service, Excellence in Care”.

Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital

Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital is one of the leading private hospitals in Hong Kong. With the motto “Quality in Service Excellence in Care”, the Hospital is committed to serving the public as well as promoting medical education and research.



Photo:

1. Mr. Wyman LI, Chief Operating Officer of HKSH Medical Group (second from left), Dr. Joseph CHAN, Chief Medical Officer of HKSH Medical Group-cum-Deputy Medical Superintendent of Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital (second from right), Dr. Raymond YUNG, Deputy Medical Superintendent-cum-Infection Control Officer of Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital, and Dr. Edmond MA, Director of Clinical Pathology & Molecular Pathology Division of Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital, pictured at the press briefing on HKSH services for COVID-19.



2. Mr. Wyman LI says that HKSH has been making preparation for another major outbreak since SARS in 2003.





3. Dr. Joseph CHAN reiterates that while patients will be transferred out based on notification requirements with reference to the CHP Guidelines, HKSH will continue to take care of non-COVID-19 patients with such medical conditions as fever and respiratory diseases.



4. Dr. Raymond YUNG says that stringent infection control measures are in place to ensure patient and staff safety.





5. Dr. Edmond MA introduces the principles and mechanism behind the COVID-19 screening test, whose results are available within 6 to 24 hours depending on the time of specimen collection.



6. A group photo of HKSH Management and Infection Control Team at the press briefing.



7. The Hospital is equipped with 16 isolation rooms, including two airborne isolation rooms (in picture).





8. Nasopharyngeal Swab (NPS) pooled with Throat Swab (TS) is mainly used for pre-admission checks for in-patients at a cost of \$3,000, whereas Deep Throat Saliva is mainly targeted for out-patients at a cost of \$2,500, in addition to and subject to doctor's consultation.



9. HKSH is also committed to raising public health awareness by launching a series of COVID-19 educational videos on YouTube since mid-February. One of the videos demonstrates the correct method of specimen collection for COVID-19 screening tests.



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