衞生防護中心
Centre for Health Protection
保障市民健康
Protecting Hong Kong's health

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Prof Gilberto Ka-kit Leung
President
Hong Kong Academy of Medicine
10/F, HKAM Jockey Club Building
99 Wong Cheuk Hang Road
Aberdeen
Hong Kong

15 April 2021

Dear Professor Leung,

Appeal to Fellows and Trainees of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine to offer coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) testing for symptomatic patients

I write to solicit your support to convey our appeal to Fellows and Trainees of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine (the Academy) to **offer COVID-19 testing for all patients with acute symptoms** in order to identify infected persons in the community as early as possible.

You may already be aware that a number of large clusters involving food premises and fitness centres were reported from late February to mid-March 2021. While the daily number of COVID-19 cases has shown a decrease since late March 2021, local cases of unknown sources/links were still being reported from time to time, and with further cases being identified through contact tracing. Of the locally-acquired cases during the period from 25 March to 7 April 2021, up to 35% were of unknown sources/links, signifying that there is still silent transmission actively ongoing in the community.

衞生防護中心乃衞生署轄下執行疾病預防及控制的專業架構
The Centre for Health Protection is a professional arm of the Department of Health for disease prevention and control

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The affected persons might only have **mild or vague symptoms** and go unrevealed with the possibility of onward transmission. With the relaxation of social distancing measures, and the potential impact from social gatherings particularly during the Easter holidays, these might contribute to a rebound of the epidemic, though the effects might only become apparent in the coming weeks or so.

In the light of the above, I should be grateful if you could urge Fellows and Trainees of the Academy to remain vigilant and ***arrange COVID-19 test for all patients presenting with any acute symptoms, irrespective of their travel history and clinical severity***. The spectrum of clinical manifestations of COVID-19 is wide. Some infected persons may present with mild or non-specific symptoms only, especially during the early stage of disease. Testing of COVID-19 at an earlier stage may enable earlier case detection, isolation and treatment, and hence reduce community spread.

In this regard, specimen bottles will be provided upon request online (https://tgptestbottle.hk/). The patients can send the specimen together with a completed laboratory form **on the same day of specimen collection** by themselves or family members/relatives/friends via one of the channels set out in the **Annex**.

In general, staff in the clinic would not be considered as close contact if both the patients and staff wear surgical masks, the duration of consultation is short (less than 15 minutes) and there is no aerosol generating procedure performed in the clinic. It is important to adhere to infection control measures all the times. Doctors may wish to refer to the guidelines published by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) for details (https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/resources/346/index.html).

The CHP has produced infographics for publicity of COVID-19 testing for patients. Doctors may refer to the following hyperlink for the infographics:

- Chinese – https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/early_testing_and_detection_tc.pdf
- English - https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/early_testing_and_detection_en.pdf

In addition, the Government has also launched the COVID-19 vaccination programme since late February 2021. We would appeal to Fellows/Trainees of the Academy to encourage eligible clients to receive COVID-19 vaccine the soonest possible.

Last but not least, thank you once again for conveying the above advice to Fellows and Trainees of the Academy through every possible means, e.g. email, newsletter etc., and the unfailing support and concerted efforts of the Academy in the prevention and control of COVID-19.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr Ronald Lam)
Controller
Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health

Annex

Channels for Collection of Specimen Bottles for COVID-19 Testing

(A) Designated Collection Points

- 47 general out-patients clinics of the Hospital Authority, or (https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/HA_clinics_submission_time_bilingual.pdf)
- 13 collection clinics of the Department of Health, or (https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/list_of_collection_points_en.pdf)
- Government premises, or (https://gia.info.gov.hk/general/202012/23/P2020122300872_357190_1_1608730738174.pdf)

(B) Door-to-door Specimen Collection Service

- provided by GOGOVAN, Pickupp or Toby at the own cost of the users. Set out below are the information for service subscriptions and enquiries:

	GOGOVAN	Pickupp	Toby
Service subscription	www.gogovan.com.hk/covid-19-testing-en/	https://hk.pickupp.io/en/blog/COVID-19-sample	www.hellotoby.com/en/ds/door-to-door-saliva-specimen-pick-up-service
General enquiries	5681 4989 (hotline)	hk@pickupp.io	3703 3250 (hotline)
Collection hours	8am to 3pm, Monday to Friday	8am to 3pm, Monday to Friday 8:30am to 10:30am on Saturdays	8:30am to 3pm, Monday to Friday 8:30am to 10:30am, Saturdays and Sundays