



Highlights of Government Anti-SARS Measures

SARS Expert Committee/Monitoring Committee

- We attach great importance to the full and timely implementation of the SARS Expert Committee's recommendations. A Monitoring Committee comprising international and local healthcare experts is overseeing the progress of implementation.

Centre for Health Protection

- A new addition to Hong Kong's public health infrastructure, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) was launched on June 1, 2004 to enhance existing disease control strategies and address new challenges.

Information and Data Management

- While the Hospital Authority's eSARS system tracked all admissions at 14 acute-care hospitals, the Police's Major Incident Investigation and Disaster Support System (MIIDSS), an analytical criminal investigation tool, and the Department of Health's Case Contact Information System (SARS-CCIS) allowed the authorities to trace the contacts of these patients for timely isolation and treatment. Over 26,000 potential SARS carriers were traced, mostly within the peak month of SARS outbreak. This IT initiative has just won the prestigious Stockholm Challenge Award.
- We plan to develop a Communicable Disease Information System to allow for a more systematic sharing of information on disease surveillance between the CHP, the Hospital Authority, other healthcare providers and non-healthcare institutions.

Cross-boundary/International Collaboration

- The CHP will build on the communication and notification mechanisms developed with Mainland and overseas health agencies. The CHP's maiden Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the Health Protection Agency of England and Wales.

Emergency Preparedness/Epidemic Management

- We have established an overall contingency mechanism, underpinned by detailed contingency plans, to set out a clear command structure for making and implementing decisions.
- We have conducted over 40 drills to assess the workability of the contingency plans. We will organise another multi-party drill this autumn, which will involve observers from overseas health protection agencies.
- About 1,400 isolation beds are now available in 14 public hospitals throughout Hong Kong to treat SARS patients. We will seek funds to construct a new infectious disease centre at the Princess Margaret Hospital.
- The CHP has arranged with voluntary sectors, notably the Auxiliary Medical Service and Civil Aid Service, to provide back-up services on quarantine arrangements in the event of a SARS outbreak.
- Since last September, more than 30,000 healthcare workers have received training on infection control.

Community Involvement

- Through a wide variety of publicity and educational measures, key messages in electronic and printed forms have been disseminated to the public to stay vigilant against and prepared for SARS.
- Temperature screening and health declaration by travellers have been a standard practice at all cross-boundary and international immigration checkpoints. Posters and radio messages with health advice are also in place at all these immigration checkpoints.
- Our health conscious service industries have introduced unique personal and environmental hygiene measures, such as hand-cleansing devices at shopping centres, restaurants, etc., to ensure Hong Kong remains a safe and hygienic city.