

Thursday, 19 January 2023

Hospital Authority continues to support COVID-19 patients in the community

In line with the Government's new measures, the Hospital Authority (HA) is adjusting its service to provide continuous support to COVID-19 patients in the community.

Currently, confirmed patients are centralized to receive treatments in the seven Designated Clinics for COVID-19 confirmed cases. When the new measures come into effect, all General Out-patients Clinics (GOPCs) will provide treatment for COVID-19 confirmed patients. Suitable patients will be prescribed with antiviral oral drugs and receive other relevant treatments. GOPCs that had been suspended will resume normal service. The quotas reserved for patients with episodic diseases, including COVID-19 patients will increase from 7500 per day to over 10 000, in order to sustain support to relevant patients.

There are approximately 700 high-risk COVID-19 patients (including the elderly, children aged 5 or below, women at 28 or more weeks of pregnancy, and immunocompromised patients) seeking consultation every day. To ensure that they can receive timely treatment, GOPCs will reserve around 1000 quotas for high-risk patients, depending on the development of the pandemic. High-risk patients can make appointments from GOPCs in the following ways:

1. using the "COVID-19 Care Booking (GOPC)" function of the mobile app "HA Go" to book an appointment;
2. using the GOPC Telephone Appointment System to book an appointment and elderly appointment quota will be allocated for elderly patients according to the information provided;
3. the HA support hotline 1836 115 will provide assistance for patients, including referring confirmed patients who are in need to GOPCs for further treatment.

Other confirmed patients can make appointments through the "Book GOPC" function in "HA Go" or the GOPC Telephone Appointment System. The HA support hotline 1836 115 will continue to answer enquiries on medical care and provide assistance to confirmed patients. Confirmed patients with mild symptoms can also visit private doctors for the prescription of COVID-19 oral drugs. Please refer to the list of private doctors through the hyperlink: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/tp_pd_antiviral.pdf.

Since confirmed patients are no longer isolated and free to go out for consultation after the new measures come into effect, the HA tele-consultation service for confirmed patients under isolation will be terminated. Relevant manpower will be deployed back to GOPCs to provide service. Confirmed patients visiting GOPCs in person can allow doctors to assess according to their medical records and clinical situation, conduct examinations on the spot and arrange necessary tests.

As the number of hospitalised confirmed patients is gradually diminishing, the HA is closely monitoring the demand on hospital beds. Hospital beds that have been reserved for confirmed patients will be released for other patients gradually. Other service will also be resumed as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the HA will enhance outreach medical support for confirmed patients in residential care homes.

Eligible persons (EP) who are infected will be charged according to the rate applicable for EP when attending GOPCs, Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres (CMCTRs) or public hospitals. For Non-eligible Persons (NEP) who attended the Department of Accident & Emergency or admitted into hospitals for urgent treatment and services, they will be charged according to the rate applicable to the NEP regardless of whether they are infected or not. If COVID-19 oral drugs are prescribed in the treatment process, the NEP are also required to pay for the relevant drugs.

“Special Chinese Medicine (CM) Out-patient Programme for COVID-19 infected persons” will continue. Eligible Hong Kong residents who have completed their isolation according to the isolation orders but are still suffering from COVID-related symptoms can follow the existing arrangement to make an appointment in the CMCTRs in 18 districts, and receive COVID-19 CM rehabilitation treatment according to clinical assessment. Priority is given to the elderly aged 65 or above.

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