



Joint Statement – 5th wave of the COVID-19 epidemic in Hong Kong

The burgeoning outbreak of the highly infectious Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 has affected all walks of life in Hong Kong. Thousands of people are infected daily and this far exceeds the capacity of the healthcare system in Hong Kong. The esteemed services of the Accident & Emergency Departments (AEDs) have been overwhelmed by the surging needs of COVID-19 patients.

This statement outlines the views of the Hong Kong College of Emergency Medicine (HKCEM), Hong Kong College of Emergency Nursing (HKCEN), Hong Kong Emergency Nurses Association (HKENA) and Hong Kong Society for Emergency Medicine and Surgery (HKSEMS) on the services of AEDs in this 5th wave of COVID-19 epidemic.

(1) Services of the Accident and Emergency Departments

AEDs play a crucial role in our healthcare system to deliver professional assessment and timely management for patients with serious health conditions. This unique role must be safeguarded in the face of any healthcare crisis.

Improper use of AEDs services unquestionably prolongs the waiting time of patients with genuine medical needs. Also, unnecessarily travelling, or staying in the crowded waiting area of AEDs may increase the risk of spreading COVID-19 in the community.

We would like to appeal to the public to spread the awareness about the prudent use of AEDs services. Meanwhile, we would like to reassure the public that healthcare professionals in the AEDs will do their best to take care of patients amid the unprecedented service needs. Waiting time for consultation and admission will inevitably be longer. Understanding and respect from the public would be highly appreciated.

(2) Accident and Emergency Departments services for COVID-19 patients

Citizens who have been tested positive on Rapid Antigen Testing for COVID-19 or received confirmatory message of positive COVID-19 test result from the Department of Health are advised to follow the Government's instructions on the subsequent arrangements.

If these citizens have symptoms of severe illness such as high fever, shortness of breath or change in mental status, prompt medical assessment at AED is advised. If there are mild symptoms of COVID-19, citizens are advised to stay at home to ensure adequate rest, or visit the Designated Clinics which are operated by the Hospital Authority to manage the confirmed COVID-19 patients.

Citizens with other non-acute medical conditions are advised to attend Government Outpatient Clinic or private clinics/ hospitals for assessment.



(3) Appeal to get vaccinated against COVID-19

Citizens are advised to be vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible. Vaccination has been proven highly effective in preventing serious illness and mortality, especially in vulnerable groups such as children, elderly and citizens with multiple medical conditions. Third dose of vaccination 6 months after the second dose confers further protection against COVID-19.

(4) Advice to Hong Kong citizens on prevention of COVID-19 transmission

We urge Hong Kong citizens to adopt the following precautionary measures to protect themselves and their families, and curb the epidemic:

- Maintain social distancing and avoid physical contact
- Avoid large-scale or multi-household gatherings
- Wear a well-fitting mask properly
- Practise meticulous hand hygiene
- Avoid talking while having meals and minimize the time without a mask
- Ensure adequate indoor ventilation at home

Finally, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the healthcare professionals of AEDs for their benevolence and devotions to the betterment of patient care, despite the huge number of patients and challenges in their working environments.

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聯合聲明 – 香港 2019 冠狀病毒病第五波疫情

由高度傳染性 Omicron 變異病毒株引起的第五波 2019 冠狀病毒病疫情迅速爆發，影響了香港各行各業，並引致每天有數以千計市民被感染。這遠遠超出了香港醫療系統的負荷能力，患者數目激增亦令優質的急症室服務不堪重負。

本聲明闡述了香港急症科醫學院 (HKCEM)、香港急症科護理學院 (HKCEN)、香港急症科護士學會 (HKENA) 和香港急症醫學會 (HKSEMS) 對 2019 冠狀病毒病疫情下的急症室服務所持的觀點及呼籲。

(1) 急症室服務

急症室在本港的醫療系統中發揮著關鍵的作用。急症室為患有嚴重健康狀況的病人提供專業的評估和適切的處理。面對任何公共醫療危機，我們都必須維護急症室此獨特的角色。

不適當使用急症室服務無疑會延長有真正醫療需要的患者的求診時間。此外，不必要的到訪或停留在擁擠的急症室等候區可能會增加 2019 冠狀病毒病在社區傳播的風險。

我們呼籲公眾適當使用急症室服務。同時，在空前的巨大服務需求下，候診和等待入院的時間必然比平常更長。然而我們深信，急症室的醫護人員仍將盡最大努力照顧病人。我們感謝公眾的理解和尊重。

(2) 關於 2019 冠狀病毒病患者的急症室服務

我們建議在 2019 冠狀病毒病快速抗原檢測中檢測呈陽性或收到衛生署 2019 冠狀病毒病陽性檢測結果確認信息的市民，應遵循政府的相關指示及後續安排。

如果市民出現例如高燒、呼吸急促或精神狀況異常等 2019 冠狀病毒病嚴重症狀，應及時到急症室進行醫療評估。如果確診者症狀輕微，應留在家中並確保有充分休息，或前往由醫院管理局為 2019 冠狀病毒病病人而設立的指定診所接受治療。

我們建議患有其他非急性疾病的市民應到政府門診或私人診所/醫院進行評估及治療。

(3) 呼籲市民接種疫苗

我們建議市民盡快接種 2019 冠狀病毒病疫苗。疫苗接種已被證明能有效預防重症和死亡個案，特別是在兒童、老年人和患有多種疾病的市民。市民在接種第二劑疫苗後六個月接種第三劑疫苗可進一步預防 2019 冠狀病毒病。

(4) 就預防 2019 冠狀病毒病傳播的建議

我們敦促香港市民採取以下預防措施，保護自己和家人，遏制疫情：

- 保持社交距離並避免身體接觸



- 避免大規模或跨家庭聚會
- 正確佩戴合適的口罩
- 時刻保持良好的個人及手部衛生
- 避免進食時說話，並盡量減少不戴口罩的時間
- 維持室內空氣流通並確保家中有足夠的鮮風

最後，我們要衷心感謝於急症室工作的同業，儘管他們需處理大量患者，並在工作環境中面對嚴峻的挑戰，但他們仍抱有保持專業和善心為病人提供更好的照顧。

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