

State Council and the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao Special Administrative Region, to organise a photo exhibition for celebrating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China. The exhibition enabled Macao people to revisit the centenary of the Chinese Communist Party's journey as it faced difficulties together with its people, and to commemorate the noble spirit of the revolutionary martyrs, thereby consolidating the social and political foundation of patriotism in Macao, and passing the core values of loyalty to our country and to Macao on to the younger generation.

The 23-day exhibition attracted 43,735 visitors and received enthusiastic responses from all sectors. The overwhelming numbers of bookings for visits by community organisations, private companies, government departments and schools fully reflected Macao people's sense of belonging to the motherland, their pride in being Chinese, and their recognition of the Chinese Communist Party.

In addition, the "National Security Education Exhibition", jointly organised by the MSAR Government and the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Macao SAR, was held for the fifth consecutive year, to demonstrate the latest progress by the country and Macao in improving the establishment of the national security system. The exhibition attracted over 42,000 visitors; plus there were over 330,000 visits to the related website.

In 2021, the "National Security and I" Chinese Essay Writing Competition for secondary school students was held for the first time, with over 4,800 entries, in which students expressed their feelings regarding their responsibilities towards the country and Macao, fully demonstrating young people's strong awareness of national security and their profound love for the country and Macao.

Over the years, the National Security Education Exhibition has been effective in raising awareness of national security among the general public, which further promotes the efforts of all sectors of the community in safeguarding national security, as well as the long-term prosperity and stability of the country and Macau. To complement the MSAR Government's education and promotional campaigns on national security, various government departments, academics and community organisations have been actively organising relevant activities to provide the community with a clearer and more accurate understanding of the meaning and importance of national security-related laws and regulations.

Timely and Precisely Adjusting Measures in Response to Changes in the COVID-19 Pandemic

As 2021 began, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continued causing worldwide impacts. Despite the gradual decline in serious cases and death rates after the emergence of vaccines, some countries and regions with lower vaccination rates still had high numbers of confirmed and hospitalised cases. In order to ensure the safety and health of Macao residents, and facilitate the stable recovery of society and the economy, the Government has been continuously reviewing and improving pandemic prevention work. By implementing appropriate pandemic prevention measures that were consistent with those of the nation through close cooperation, joint pandemic prevention and control, we have overcome the fluctuating pandemic situation.



Promoting Vaccination to Ensure Public Health

With the full support of the Central People's Government, the first batch of 100,000 doses of Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine arrived in Macao on 6 February. On 9 February, the vaccines were made available to priority groups in the first phase of vaccinations, including frontline staff in checkpoints, police officers, fire service officers, cold-chain food handlers, staff in entertainment venues, teaching and administrative staff in schools, and people who urgently needed to travel to regions with medium to high risk.

On the morning of 9 February, Chief Executive Ho Iat Seng led principal officials of the Government to receive vaccinations, to show the Government's confidence in the vaccines. After receiving vaccination, the Chief Executive said that he felt nothing unusual and no adverse reaction. He appealed to all Macao residents to participate in pandemic prevention, and protect their own health by receiving vaccination on a voluntary basis.

On 9 February, 595 people received COVID-19 vaccinations, and the total number of people in priority groups who had booked vaccinations had exceeded 1,300. On the same day, the Health Bureau started accepting bookings from residents who were not in the priority groups, for vaccinations starting from 22 February. On the first day, 4,033 people successfully made appointments for vaccination, including approximately 2,500 people who opted to be vaccinated on 22 February.

To enable all residents in Macao to receive vaccinations, the Health Bureau established 12 vaccination stations, providing up to 5,000 vaccinations per day. Residents could select vaccination stations when making appointments. At each vaccination station, healthcare professionals were

available to conduct health assessments for residents. Upon being vaccinated, residents were required to stay in the vaccination station's observation area for 30 minutes, to ensure there were no immediate side effects.

On 27 February, the first batch of 100,000 doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, jointly produced by BioNTech, a German company, and Shanghai Fosun Pharma, arrived in Macao. Starting on 3 March, the Health Bureau arranged vaccinations for residents who opted for the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. On the same day, an Executive Order was issued and published in the *Macao SAR Gazette*, specifying the persons applicable for receiving the two types of COVID-19 vaccines through the "Special Vaccination Programme of the Macao SAR", according to the standards of the National Medical Products Administration.

During the year, the Health Bureau established more vaccination stations in various districts of Macao, to facilitate public vaccinations. As at the end of 2021, there were 18 vaccination stations in Macao. Meanwhile, the Health Bureau also organised outreach vaccination services with the Social Welfare Bureau, Kiang Wu Hospital and several gaming operators.

As at the end of 2021, a total of 970,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been administered in Macao, with 493,000 people vaccinated, among whom, 31,000 had received the first dose, 430,000 had received the second dose, and 33,000 had received the third dose. The number of vaccinated people represented 72.2 percent of Macao's total population; while the number of vaccinated people aged three or above represented 74.1 percent of the total population in this age range.

To face the challenges arising from the more transmissible new coronavirus variant – Omicron, from the first half of November 2021, the Health Bureau arranged COVID-19 booster vaccinations for employees in high-risk roles and people who urgently needed to travel to high-risk regions. On 7 January 2022, the scope of vaccination was expanded to all residents aged 18 or above, and individuals in urgent need of receiving booster vaccinations at least three months after receiving the second dose.

Persisting with Preventing Imported Cases and Community Transmissions

On 3 August 2021, two Macao residents visiting Zhuhai were confirmed to be infected with COVID-19. Thereafter, their two children living with them were also confirmed to be infected. On the same day, the Chief Executive declared that Macao had entered a state of immediate COVID-19 prevention with effect from 3:30 p.m., and all outbound border-crossing individuals must hold valid proof of a negative nucleic acid test result issued within 24 hours. With effect from midnight on 4 August, the time limit for a valid nucleic test was tightened to 12 hours.

Region-specific, multi-level disease prevention and control were implemented for the first time. Based on the residence and movement of the confirmed cases, red code and yellow code zones were designated, to trace middle- and high-risk target groups for medical isolation. On 4 August, with effect from 9:00 a.m., the first round of community-wide nucleic acid tests was launched, with the aim of cutting off the COVID-19 transmission channels.

With the assistance of 300 testing personnel from Guangdong province sent to Macao at the request of the MSAR Government, the community-wide nucleic acid testing was successfully

carried out, and no confirmed cases were found. As at midnight on 18 August, after the people within the red code and yellow code zones had undergone multiple nucleic acid tests, no confirmed case was found, thus the Government announced the reopening of the red code and yellow code zones.

On 22 September, a Macao resident who returned to Macao from Turkey was confirmed to be infected with COVID-19 during medical observation. On 24 September, a Nepalese security guard in the same quarantine hotel was also confirmed to be infected. The Health Bureau immediately conducted nucleic acid tests of related persons, and one more confirmed case was found. Macao again entered the state of COVID-19 prevention. With effect from 3:00 p.m., the Health Bureau launched a new round of community-wide nucleic acid tests, in order to prevent community transmissions. Through the region-specific and multi-level disease prevention and control mechanism, four more security guards from the same hotel were confirmed to be infected; they were close contacts of the two newly confirmed cases.

On 5 October, another confirmed case was found in Macao. The infected person was a non-local renovation worker who lived in Doumen, Zhuhai, and became the 72nd confirmed case of COVID-19 in Macao. According to genetic comparison, the strain of coronavirus was found to be homologous with the one detected in the security guard group.

The Macao authorities responsible for Macao-Zhuhai COVID-19 prevention and control announced that the medical observations and quarantine exclusion arrangement at the Zhuhai-Macao ports would be cancelled with effect from 12 noon on 5 October. After entering Zhuhai, individuals would be required to undergo medical observations and quarantine. By the evening on the same day, two more confirmed cases were found among the renovation workers working for the same unit as the case detected earlier in the day. Thereafter, three more contacts of the 72nd confirmed case were also found.

Also on 5 October, the Health Bureau announced the launch of the third round of community-wide nucleic acid tests. As at 9:00 a.m. on 7 October, a cumulative total of approximately 680,000 people had been tested. All specimens collected for the tests proved negative for COVID-19. Ahead of schedule, the Health Bureau announced that the third round of community-wide nucleic acid tests had been successfully carried out, with a total of 2.1 million tests conducted.

Taking into account of the latest developments in the pandemic, on 7 October the Health Bureau and the Macao Government Tourist Office started optimising the workflow for medical observations in hotels, including by implementing “close-loop management”; introducing robots to provide contactless services, such as temperature scanning and delivery of supplies. This was to minimise contacts between employees in high-risk roles and people under quarantine.

In view of the poor hygiene and overcrowding at San Mei On Building (Phase 1), where the 75th confirmed case resided, the building was considered unfavourable for pandemic prevention. On 10 October, the Health Bureau moved 821 people from the building to Treasure Hotel for medical observation.

To more precisely and promptly tackle the challenges arising from pandemic, the Health Bureau developed a beta version of Macao Health Code mobile app, which was launched on 18 November, with functions including venue codes and risk checking. The app’s venue codes were first launched in public medical institutions. By the end of 2021, the scope of the app was expanded to cover public

buses and all social services facilities in Macao. As at the end of 2021, there were approximately 133,000 registered users of the Macao Health Code mobile app, and by mid-January 2022, the number of registered users had increased to 479,000.

As at 31 December 2021, there was an accumulated total of 79 confirmed cases recorded in Macao, of whom 77 had recovered and been discharged. Macao has maintained a record of zero deaths, zero hospital transmissions, low rates of severe cases and high cure rates. Moreover, it normally took two months for a COVID-19 patient to undergo the process of hospitalisation, isolation during the recovery period, and being discharged from the hospital to the community, so as to ensure the health of the patients and other residents.

The Information Bureau fully leveraged its functions by actively supporting the Government's pandemic policies. Through a wide range of platforms, it provided immediate dissemination of pandemic information and news. A total of 111 live broadcasts of press conferences, more than a thousand press releases, 461 infographics related to pandemic prevention and 53 promotional videos related to pandemic policies were produced, enabling the public to receive up-to-date information about the pandemic, and pandemic prevention work by various government departments.

In 2021, Macao twice entered the state of immediate COVID-19 prevention, from 3 August to 10 August and from 25 September to 15 October. During these periods, the Information Bureau's official website published 1,017 Chinese-, 588 Portuguese- and 318 English-language press releases; 19 Chinese-, 18 Portuguese- and 14 English-language infographics; and produced and published 38 Chinese-, 13 Portuguese- and three English-language videos.

The Facebook page on the pandemic managed by the Information Bureau became one of the crucial platforms for promptly delivering official information during the pandemic, to reassure the public. In 2021, the Facebook page published 5,243 posts, including 4,625 infographics and 618 video clips (101 of which were live broadcasts).

To prevent COVID-19 from entering the community through imported goods, especially imported cold-chain food, in 2021 the Municipal Affairs Bureau adjusted the pandemic prevention measures regarding imported cold-chain food, to strengthen three anti-epidemic frontlines – goods, environment and workers.

Those measures included implementation of “disinfection of all outer packaging and inspection of all inner packaging” cold-chain food preventive arrangements; formulation of contingency plans for cold-chain food testing positive in different circumstances, and completion of a pandemic prevention drill; establishment of a contingency plan for pandemic prevention in wholesale markets, and conduct pandemic prevention drill with eight departments and the industry; and upgrade of the contingency level for pandemic prevention of cold-chain and live food, and minimise the risk of disease outbreaks and spread.

In 2021, the Municipal Affairs Bureau tested more than 64,000 random samples from food and the environment; all yielded negative nucleic acid results.

Meanwhile, in supporting the Health Bureau's pandemic prevention measures, the Municipal Affairs Bureau conducted thorough cleaning and disinfection of residential buildings of the confirmed cases, and nearby areas. Moreover, it aligned with the work of the livelihood support

group and provided basic living and food supplies to the residents of the red code and yellow code zones during lockdown. In 2021, the Municipal Affairs Bureau provided 7,900 contingent food packs, and about 98,000 hot packed meals, and assisted with transferring resources on approximately 1,900 occasions.

Targeted and Normalised Pandemic Prevention for Resuming Normal Daily Life

In 2021, the Health Bureau made timely adjustments to the pandemic prevention measures, in response to developments with the pandemic. The major measures included:

- Modified and renovated isolation wards to provide 266 high-standard isolation beds; and formulated contingency plans;
- Commenced a regular nucleic acid test programme in cooperation with third-party institutions, to enhance Macao's testing capacity. As at the end of 2021, a total of 10,800,000 samples had been tested;
- Ensured all residents and domestic helpers in Macao could buy one mask per day for pandemic prevention use. As at 31 December 2021, approximately 230 million masks had been sold;
- Strengthened border quarantine measures for inbound travellers from different regions, including by launching an electronic health reporting and health declaration system, and implementing border quarantine measures such as body temperature screening and medical observations; and tightened immigration policies based on actual situations; and
- Strengthened promotion of pandemic prevention in the community through a series of measures, such as briefing sessions, pandemic prevention guidelines and videos, press conferences, phone inquiry hotlines, community advice announcements and forming the Anti-epidemic Support Volunteer Reserve Team, to increase public awareness of hygiene education and health protection, and facilitate cooperation between all sectors on a timely basis, to prevent virus transmission in the community.

To prevent transmission of COVID-19 in Macao, the Macao Government Tourist Office followed the Chief Executive's order to enforce closures of bars, dance halls, karaoke venues, sauna, massage establishments and health clubs from 5 August to 17 August, and from 6 October to 18 October. During the periods, the MGTO also sent officers for ongoing inspections and monitoring. After the reopening of these establishments, inspectors were also sent to ensure that the establishments continued to observe pandemic prevention measures.

The MGTO also worked with multiple departments by providing pandemic prevention vehicles at various border checkpoints, to pick up parties who were at risk, and transfer them to designated quarantine stations and medical observation hotels. At the end of 2021, close-loop management was implemented for drivers operating the medical observation routes. These "close-loop drivers" were checked in to the medical observation hotels, to prevent the virus entering the community.