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From: Hong Kong AIDS Foundation

Date: 28 February, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Response to the 2019-20 Budget:

“Why is there no mention of sex education for people at risk of HIV infection?

Where are the resources allocated for our early- aged HIV patients?

The latest Budget sheds a dim light on our next generation.”

The 2019-20 Budget was released by the HKSAR Government yesterday. For healthcare, apart from around \$1 billion used for the upgrading and acquisition of medical equipment, which is the average amount each year, the Government will earmark an additional \$5 billion for the Hospital Authority to expedite the work in this area. Moreover, with a view to include more drugs for patients, an additional recurrent subvention of \$400 million will be provided for the HA to expand the scope of the Drug Formulary.

As expected, we found no direct areas or highlights related to HIV/AIDS issues nor HIV patients, though we were told by the Budget that more than 500 additional residential care places and 300 subsidised day care places will be provided for the elderly in the next two years. Yet of course the “elderly” as mentioned here meant the elderly in general. We still have no clue about what our government will plan for HIV and AIDS patients, though they have been calling for more support over the years. With the lack of vision and inadequate consideration laid down in the latest Budget, the above measures will definitely not be able to tackle the HIV/AIDS situation in Hong Kong.

According to the latest figures on the HIV/AIDS situation in Hong Kong released by The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) released on Tuesday, a total of 172 new cases of HIV infection were reported in the fourth quarter of 2018 and the accumulated total number of HIV infections reported has reached 9,715.

The Hong Kong AIDS Foundation is deeply concerned about the HIV infection situation, especially in the homosexual category. Compared to the same quarter in 2017, the number of new HIV infections through homosexual contact has increased from 67 cases to 82 cases (i.e. a 22% increase) (See Appendix).

Furthermore, the statistics revealed that the number of HIV infections among non-Chinese has



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increased from 99 cases (14.5%) in 2017 to 138 cases (22.1%) in 2018. In addition, of all age groups, those aged 20-29 accounted for the greatest proportion of reported HIV infection in 2018.

In response to these worrying figures, Eris Lau, the Foundation's Chief Executive has shown her deep concern for the health care of Hong Kong's next generation: "**More resources should be allocated to promote sex education to provide proper counselling to adolescents** about safe sex. We need to implant a concept in the minds of young people, regardless of their sexual orientation, that they should protect themselves through using condoms; and taking regular HIV tests.

Regrettably, we don't see much in the way of planning for high-risk groups in the Budget and the visionary tactics to cope with early-aged HIV patients have not been addressed."

We would like to take this opportunity to recommend that more resources be allocated in these areas

1. Sex education and proper counselling to adolescents;
2. Support for AIDS service organisations to foster services for HIV patients and people infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS;
3. PrEP Programme via the public healthcare system;
4. Provision of HIV tests for the general public; and
5. Services and care for ethnic minorities.

About the Hong Kong AIDS Foundation

The Hong Kong AIDS Foundation was established in 1991 and is a non-governmental social service organization. The Foundation's mission is to limit the spread of HIV infection in the community. Throughout the years, the Foundation has been actively engaged in the promotion of AIDS education, the provision of services, and the nurturing of a harmonious and caring environment for those infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. For more details about our work, please visit <http://www.aids.org.hk>.

Media Enquires

For media enquiries, please contact Ms. Wincy Wang, Marketing and Publicity Manager of the Hong Kong AIDS Foundation, at 2513 7735 / 9037 9087 or by email to wincywang@hkaf.com; or Ms. Brenda Chan, Assistant Director of the Strategic Public Relations Group Limited, at 2114 4396 / 6108 6048 or by email to brenda.chan@sprg.com.hk.



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Appendix

HIV/AIDS Situation in Hong Kong as at 31 December 2018

	This Quarter (Oct to Dec 2018)		Cumulative	
	HIV	AIDS	HIV	AIDS
1. Sex				
Male	148	29	7,936	1,656
Female	24	8	1,779	340
2. Ethnicity				
Chinese	127	30	6,733	1,534
Non-Chinese	32	7	2,733	462
Unknown	13	0	249	0
3. Route of Transmission				
Heterosexual contacts	33	13	3,222	1,048
Homosexual contacts	82	17	3,906	593
Bisexual contacts	14	2	520	116
Injecting drug use	2	1	361	67
Blood / blood product recipients	0	0	85	25
Perinatal	0	0	33	10
Undetermined	41	4	1,588	137
4. Total	172	37	9,715	1,996

Source: Department of Health