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From: Hong Kong AIDS Foundation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Minorities matter!

The Hong Kong AIDS Foundation is keen to strengthen its support to ethnic minorities

The Hong Kong AIDS Foundation (the Foundation) has been closely monitoring the AIDS situation in Hong Kong. The *Review of HIV/AIDS in 2017* released by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health yesterday reported that, the total number of HIV infection cases in 2017 was 11 fewer than in 2016 (or nearly a 10% reduction). In addition, a total of 139 new cases of HIV infection were detected from October to December (4th quarter) of 2017. The figure represents a drop of 14 cases compared with the figure in the 3rd quarter. All in all, the cumulative number of HIV infections in Hong Kong has hit 9,091 cases.

More than 60% of the newly infected cases were as a result of homosexual or bisexual contact last year, and almost 20% of new HIV infections were members of ethnic minority groups (see Appendix). With the rising trend of new infections among ethnic minority groups, the Foundation sought more details from the Department of health for the years 2013 – 2016. We found that the number of Indonesian women who were HIV positive had increased from only 6 cases in 2013 to 20 cases in 2016 (more than a threefold increase over four years).

The Chief Executive of the Foundation, Ms Eris Lau, stressed something that the Hong Kong Government and the public must be mindful of: "Previously, all promotional efforts had been focused on men who have sex with men, but we need to remind society that HIV/AIDS prevention and education should not be confined to one particular high-risk group. Last year, the Foundation successfully



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applied for funding from the AIDS Trust Fund (ATF) for launching tailor-made programmes targeting ethnic minorities (or non-Chinese speaking groups) in Hong Kong. All these programmes will include but not be limited to the following: a) HIV and Sex education, b) HIV antibody testing and c) support services for female members of ethnic minority groups. We expect that with our new focus and effort directed towards ethnic minorities, and in particular women, we can help further reduce the total number of infections in Hong Kong. "

According to the results of the 2016 Population By-census, there were more than 560,000 members of ethnic minorities residing in Hong Kong. However, there have been no special promotional campaigns targeting the HIV testing of these groups. In view of this, from as early as 2011, the Foundation has been working with various non-Chinese service organizations to initiate prevention education and intervention work for ethnic minorities (in particular women). This year, thanks to the funding provided by the ATF, we will officially launch more preventive education and testing services in terms of increasing outreach activities in different areas of Hong Kong where female members of ethnic minority groups generally frequent. The Foundation hopes that, through the HIV and sex education provided by the new programmes, female members of ethnic minority groups, in particular, will be better able to protect themselves from infection, and they can then pass on this valuable knowledge to others.



The Foundation is determined to step up preventive education for ethnic minorities (in particular women) residing in Hong Kong

HIV antibody testing should be considered part of a regular checkup. HKAF is now calling on those who have a history of unsafe sex to contact the Foundation on 2513 0513 for HIV testing, which should be conducted three months after unprotected sexual exposure/possible HIV exposure. HKAF has testing facilities in Lai Chi Kok, Central and Shaukeiwan.



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About Hong Kong AIDS Foundation

Hong Kong AIDS Foundation was established in 1991 and is a non-governmental social service organisation. 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 media enquiries, please contact Ms. Cathy Ng, Marketing and Publicity Manager of the Hong Kong AIDS Foundation, at 2560 8528 / 6130 5611 or by email to cathyng@hkaf.com; or Ms. May Lam at Media Power Marketing & PR, at 3590 3912 / 9199 0641 or by email to may@mediapower.hk



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Appendix

HIV/AIDS Situation in Hong Kong as at 31 December 2017

| | This Quarter (Oct to Dec 2017) | | Cumulative | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| | HIV | AIDS | HIV | AIDS |
| 1. Sex | | | | |
| Male | 118 | 22 | 7,406 | 1,547 |
| Female | 21 | 6 | 1,685 | 310 |
| 2. Ethnicity | | | | |
| Chinese | 92 | 22 | 6,257 | 1,427 |
| Non-Chinese | 25 | 6 | 2,586 | 430 |
| Unknown | 22 | 0 | 248 | 0 |
| 3. Route of Transmission | | | | |
| Heterosexual contacts | 21 | 11 | 3,066 | 996 |
| Homosexual contacts | 56 | 13 | 3,576 | 531 |
| Bisexual contacts | 11 | 2 | 452 | 99 |
| Injecting drug use | 1 | 1 | 356 | 66 |
| Blood / blood product recipients | 0 | 0 | 85 | 25 |
| Perinatal | 0 | 0 | 33 | 10 |
| Undetermined | 50 | 1 | 1,523 | 130 |
| 4. Total | 139 | 28 | 9,091 | 1,857 |

Source: Department of Health