

12 April 2021

The Honourable Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, GBM, GBS, JP
Chief Secretary for Administration
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
25/F, Central Government Offices
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar
Hong Kong

Dear Chief Secretary,

The coronavirus pandemic, which is into its second year, has changed the world as we know it. Although social restrictions have helped contain the spread of the virus in Hong Kong, these have come at an immense economic cost on livelihoods and businesses in the city notwithstanding the Government's efforts to provide relief.

The approval and rollout of vaccines earlier this year is therefore regarded as a welcomed development as this would help create herd immunity, which would in turn restore normalcy by bringing the pandemic under control. It is therefore quite disappointing to note that, to date, only about 7 per cent of the city's population have received the first of two vaccine doses since commencement of the local vaccination programme.

Needless to say, a delay in vaccinating the entire population would mean continuing uncertainties amid the risk of a resurgence in cases. Other than health implications, this would mean a prolongation of the economic malaise that Hong Kong is currently subjected to.

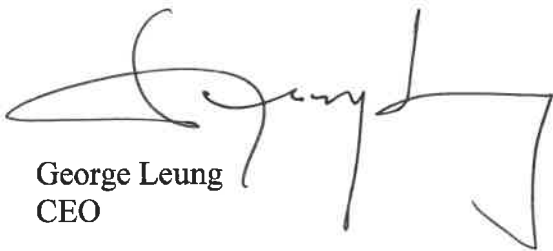
To promote public buy-in and achieve a higher vaccination rate, we suggest that the Government take active measures to (1) highlight the benefits of vaccination, and (2) address misgivings and misinformation surrounding vaccines. To that end, we suggest that the Government give serious consideration to the following :

- Introduce a Digital Vaccine Certificate (DVC) to provide evidence that a person has been vaccinated. DVC holders would enjoy waivers from social- distancing restrictions and be allowed to attend large-scale events such as concerts or sports fixtures.
- Exempt DVC holders from mandatory quarantine on their return to Hong Kong. Fully vaccinated residents would also enjoy quarantine-free entry to jurisdictions with which Hong Kong has entered into travel bubble agreements.

- Set vaccination rate targets and tie these to the relaxation of social-distancing restrictions. As and when a certain percentage of the population is progressively vaccinated, social-distancing guidelines could then be eased correspondingly on reaching these targets.
- Encourage and persuade workers in sectors that require high levels of face-to-face contact to be vaccinated. These include those employed in the construction, medical, healthcare, retail, restaurants and hospitality sectors. Those who are vaccinated can be exempted from undergoing compulsory testing, and establishments in the events, entertainment and hospitality sectors with fully vaccinated staff would be certified as being safe and trusted venues.
- Improve transparency to address concerns over the safety and effectiveness of vaccines. The fight against the pandemic has been complicated with misinformation and falsehoods, which has given rise to vaccine hesitancy among the public.

The business community is prepared to support and assist the Government in a concerted effort to overcome any vaccine-related concerns and anxieties by providing accurate, reliable and trustworthy information to their employees and family members. At the same time, we hope that the Government is open to suggestions and initiatives that are conducive to achieving a higher vaccination rate.

Yours sincerely,



George Leung
CEO