



100 days of Combatting the Pandemic 抗疫 100 天

扶康會總幹事
徐群燕

TSUI Kwan-yin, Frankie
Fu Hong Society
Chief Executive Officer

第五波新冠病毒 Omicron 變異株於 2021 年 12 月下旬開始在本港蔓延，專家們早有警告，確診數字將會幾何級數增加。由 2022 年 1 月 23 日錄得 125 宗本地感染至 3 月 3 日達到峰頂，快速測試及核酸檢測的單日確診總數達 7.7 萬宗！根據衛生署衛生防護中心於 2022 年 4 月 10 日的報導，至今共有 290 間殘疾人士院舍爆發疫症。雖然到 4 月中的單日確診宗數已回落至百位數，但第五波疫情開始至 2022 年 4 月 18 日累計 1,185,807 宗陽性個案，錄得死亡人數共 8,946。院舍受疫情影響可謂既深且遠，值得反思！

對手超強 防不勝防

扶康會現有 23 間津助殘疾人士院舍及 3 間自負盈虧小型家舍，為超過 1,000 名殘疾人士提供住宿照顧服務。在過去 100 天，共超過 700 名院友受到感染，約佔 65%。自葵涌邨被圍封強檢，大家都擔驚受怕，怕疫情不斷蔓延，果然如此……

更好的防守戰術，都要有預賽、集訓、部署及後備，否則一遇超強對手，只會潰不成軍。本港經歷了前四波的疫情，總算有驚無險。本會在過去兩年的抗疫中，亦算撐得住，安然無恙地渡過。

Omicron, the fifth COVID-19 variant began to spread in Hong Kong in the latter half of December 2021. Experts have warned that confirmed cases would rise exponentially. Beginning from 125 recorded local cases on 23 January 2022, the wave reached its peak on 3 March, when the total number of confirmed cases by rapid testing and nucleic acid testing reached 77,000 in a single day! According to the Department of Health's Centre for Health Protection's report on 10 April 2022, so far there are 290 hostels for the disabled that have experienced outbreaks. Even though recorded single-day cases subsided to hundreds by mid April, 1,185,807 positive cases and 8,946 deaths were recorded from the beginning of the fifth wave of the pandemic by 18 April, 2022. The impact of the pandemic is profound and far-reaching. It must be taken seriously!

An enemy too powerful to guard against

The Society currently has 23 subsidised hostels for persons with disabilities and 3 self-financed small homes that provide residential care services for more than 1,000 persons with disabilities. In the past two months, more than 700 residents were infected, mounting up to around 65%. Ever since Kwai Chung Estate was enclosed to undergo mandatory testing, we had all been worried and fearful of the spread of the pandemic from Kwai Chung. Then, our worst fear happened

No matter the defense tactic, it is necessary to have preliminaries, training, planning and backup plans. Otherwise, we would crumble during our first encounter with a powerful enemy. Hong Kong has sailed through its first four waves of the pandemic without sustaining much harm. In the past two years, the Society has held its ground and passed through without suffering much harm from the pandemic.

Retreating is to prepare for returning

Even so, in face of the intimidating fifth wave, we did not dare to take the situation lightly. After a staff who lives in Kwai Chung Estate was diagnosed on 25 January, all necessary preparations were made, including updating relevant guidelines, ordering supplies and estimating manpower. Unfortunately, our first rapid test positive case eventually appeared in a hostel for the severe intellectual disability in the morning of 8 February. In early February, when the outbreak first began, the number of places for close contact quarantine at the Asia World Expo Community Treatment Facility (AWE) were already extremely limited. At that time, everyone was debating and struggling on issues such as on-site quarantine, AWE quarantine, and staffing. Fortunately, after several mediation and coordination, we were finally informed that we can use the Society's rehabus to send uninfected residents to quarantine at the AWE on 21 February. Five staff were volunteered to escort the residents to the AWE and stay there for taking care of them. However, blessings do not come repeatedly. On the night of evacuation, the hostel received the nucleic acid test results of the residents. There were several diagnosed residents on each car, hence they could not depart. We even had to re-send our rehabus to transport diagnosed residents from the AWE to the hospital.

撤離原是為回來作準備

縱是如此，面對來勢洶洶的第五波，大家也不敢掉以輕心，打從家住葵涌邨的員工於 1 月 25 日確診後，已做好抗疫準備，包括更新相關指引、訂購物資、預計人手等。不幸地，第 1 位快速測試呈陽性的院友終於在 2 月 8 日早上在一間嚴重智障人士宿舍出現。2 月上旬，疫情開始爆發後，亞博館社區治療設施（亞博）給予密切接觸者隔離檢疫的名額已非常緊張；當時大家都在原址隔離、亞博檢疫、人手編排等議題上爭論及掙扎。幸而，幾經斡旋、協調及體諒，終於獲通知可以用院車將未受到感染的院友在 2 月 21 日送去亞博接受隔離檢疫，為能在亞博照顧院友，院舍安排了 5 位員工跟車往亞博並留下協助照顧院友。福無重至，撤離當晚，院舍才收到院友的核酸測試結果，每車都有幾位院友證實確診而不能前往，甚至需要再出車把確診院友從亞博轉送醫院。

殘疾人士是邊緣的病人？

那邊廂於 2 月 11 日撤離，另一邊廂有兩間院舍傳來有多名院友身體不適，快測呈陽的噩耗。這兩間院舍內病毒傳播速度之快，令人咋舌，於數日內，院友因發燒及其他病徵，已送往求醫。剛巧醫院管理局表示將實施新的確診病人分流措施，將隔離病床留予病情嚴重、長者和兒童病人，並優先安排這三類病人入院。有官員形容當時是「戰時」狀態，不要糾結在哪一方的責任，能夠幫忙的都應該幫。

Persons with disabilities are marginalised patients?

While the evacuation took place on 11 February, we received the bad news of a significant number of residents falling ill and testing positive in two hostels. The speed of transmission in those two hostels was astounding. Within a few days, residents were already sent to the hospital due to fever and other symptoms. It was then that the Hospital Authority announced a new triage measure for confirmed patients. Isolation beds would be reserved for the seriously ill, elderly and children. Patients from these three categories would be prioritised admission. Some government officials compared the situation to that experienced during 'wartime'. We should not focus on whose responsibility it was, and provide assistance whenever it was possible.

真係幾何級數增加

第4間院舍爆發新冠疫情於2月14日(情人節)傍晚。在「送唔送去急症室」、「收唔收番入院」、「去唔去到亞博」、「員工確診去左邊到」、「俾唔俾員工番屋企喇」等成為抗疫的日常議題。這間院舍是第2間，亦是最後一間有院友送往亞博，唯一不同的地方，第1間是將未受感染的密切接觸者在亞博隔離檢疫，第2間是將快速呈陽的確診院友送往亞博治療。由2月8日開始至2月25日止，前後只有18天，大家經歷著不同境況及處理方法；稍為令人安慰的，獲得衛生署曾派員到訪視察這最後一間將確診院友送往亞博的院舍評為不宜原址檢疫的地方，原因也顯而易見：這間院舍因應牌照要求而正在進行大型裝修以致可用的空間不足，亦缺乏足夠窗戶令室內空氣流通。縱使曾千方百計將快速呈陰的院友搬往其他地方暫居(逆向隔離)，也難以避免全部院友被感染的結果。

眾志成城 遇強越強

到3月初，所有院舍均有不同程度的爆發。在指定診所求醫、家居抗疫及隔離14天改為第6、7天快測呈陰後被視為康復等抗疫策略中，院舍已靜靜地、悄悄地進行原址檢疫。若院友出現發燒及其他病徵，就堅持送院治療，及沒有CT值顯示病毒失去傳染性報告堅持不離院，是不能退讓的「底線」。

若要為第五波疫情來個小結，個人認為也言之尚早，因現時仍然有零星確診院友需要被送往亞博治療。抗疫一百天，猶如坐針氈。每個崗位的員工，各司其職、各有領悟、各有故事。抗疫路上還有漫長路要走，更要思考如何重置服務及恢復員工士氣。作為危機應變團隊的召集人，面對百年一遇的疫症，要感謝的人實在很多，包括連續數日踩十二小時一更的員工、捐贈物資及金錢的善長，更重要來自董事局及管理團隊的支持和信任。縱使偶爾大家有不同意見，但目標一致的話，定能眾志成城，遇強越強。在此，送給各位兩個力量：一是「強韌力」，二是「恢復力」；「強韌力」是要為心靈加添力量，遇到困難時，切記要冷靜應對，勿讓恐懼及憂慮情緒蓋過自己的判斷；「恢復力」則要盡快使自己從悲傷中復原，自己的內在資源才是療癒的良藥。

Exponential growth

The fourth hostel having infected residents happened in the evening of 14 February (Valentine's Day). "Should he/she be sent to the A&E", "will he/she return to the hostel?", "are we going to the Asia World Expo", "where will staff go if we tested positive", "can staff return home to take a rest" became daily issues under the pandemic. This is the second, and the last hostel where residents were sent to the AWE. The only difference was that the first hostel sent those who were uninfected, but were in close contact with the infected to the AWE quarantine facility, whereas the second hostel sent those who tested positive for treatment in the AWE. From 8 February to 25 February, during those 18 days, we experienced a variety of situations and handled them in a variety of ways. What was comforting was that the Health Authority had sent someone to inspect the last hostel where infected residents were sent to the AWE. The reason why the



site was deemed as unsuitable for on-site quarantine was clear. Because the hostel was undergoing renovation in order to satisfy licensing requirements, there was insufficient space and windows for ventilation. Despite relocating residents who tested negative as quickly as possible to temporarily stay in other places (reverse quarantine), the residents being totally infected just couldn't be avoided.

United we stand stronger

By the beginning of March, outbreaks of varying degrees began in all our hostels. As pandemic response strategies readjusted to new strategies such as treatment at designated clinics and home-based quarantine, while the 14-day quarantine period was reviewed so that a "RAT" negative test produced on the 6th and 7th day is regarded as a proof of recovery, our hostels began to adopt on-site quarantine as well. If our residents were found to have a fever or other symptoms and insisted on receiving treatment at the hospital, or insisted on remaining at the hospital without a CT value that displays the loss of transmissibility of the virus, that was when a clear and unnegotiable 'bottom line' needed to be introduced.

Personally, I think it is still too early to draw a conclusion on the fifth wave of the pandemic, as there are a few residents who still need to be sent to the AWE for treatment. Combatting the virus in the past 100 days has been like sitting on pins and needles. Our staff in each position have performed their duties well, each having their own takeaways and their own stories to tell. There is still a long way to go in this fight against the pandemic. We have a lot to think about in terms of resettling our service and restoring staff morale. As the convener of the crisis response team, in the face of this once-in-a-century pandemic, we have a lot to thank for, including our staff who consecutively sustained 12-hour shifts for several days, donors who donated materials and funds and more, and importantly, the support and trust from our council and the management team. While we sometimes hold different opinions, with a unified goal, we will certainly be stronger together. I am taking this opportunity to remind you of the following essential strengths: the first being "resilience" and the second being "recoverability". "Resilience" brings you mental strength. When faced with difficulties, remember to keep calm and not let fear and worry cloud your judgement. Meanwhile, "recoverability" allows you to step out of grief as soon as possible, because your inner self is the best cure.