

April 26, 2021

The Editor  
The New England Journal of Medicine

Dear Editor,

Re the article “Health Care Worker Strikes and the Covid Pandemic” (April 7, 2021), I wish to make clarifications and set the record straight.

First, the Hong Kong SAR Government has been committed to protecting the safety of healthcare workers. We’ve allocated an additional US\$ 1 billion to our Hospital Authority to procure PPE and enhance support for frontline staff; non-emergency services have been reduced to re-prioritise resources.

While, sadly, 209 patients with COVID-19 have died in Hong Kong, there are zero fatalities among healthcare workers.

Second, to claim that we “failed to act” on border closure is groundless. In fact, Hong Kong was among the first places to restrict cross-border travel. On January 27, 2020, people from Hubei Province were barred from entering Hong Kong. After which cross-boundary travel between Hong Kong and the rest of China (and elsewhere) was substantially reduced.

Over 85% of cross-border travellers to Hong Kong are local residents. We continue to monitor the situation while allowing our residents to travel back wherever possible.

I am afraid your article is a misrepresentation of the facts.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sophia Chan  
Secretary for Food & Health  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government