

A physician in Caritas Medical Centre confirmed COVID-19 infection

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson of Caritas Medical Centre (CMC) made the following announcement today (August 2) on the confirmed COVID-19 infection of a physician:

An internal medicine and geriatric doctor from CMC sought treatment with sore throat on July 31. His nasopharyngeal swab and deep throat saliva samples taken yesterday were tested positive for COVID-19 today. He is currently receiving isolation treatment at Princess Margaret Hospital. The two family members who lived with him developed symptoms on July 23 and July 27; and were diagnosed on July 31 and August 1, respectively.

After the CMC was informed yesterday, the Hospital Infection Control Team has followed up the incident with the Chief Infection Control Officer and the Centre for Health Protection. Close contacts were traced, including doctors, nurses, allied health professionals, and supporting staff. Currently, a total of three medical staff have been classified as close contacts and need to be quarantined for 14 days. In addition, 24 healthcare staff and 17 patients are listed as other contacts, subject to 28-day medical surveillance and COVID-19 testing. Currently, all staff members have tested negative.

The affected doctor had treated two COVID-19 patients (case number 2688, and a preliminary positive case aged 87), both of whom were admitted to the medical ward. During his clinical duties, the doctor complied with COVID-19 infection control guidelines, including the wearing of appropriate personal protective equipment and hand hygiene. Since the doctor's family members first developed symptoms, it was epidemiologically inferred that he has acquired infection from his family cluster.

The above-mentioned preliminary confirmed case of the 87-year-old male patient came from the Siu Sin Nursing Centre on Tai Po Road. He was admitted to the surveillance ward of CMC on July 23 and was transferred to the medical ward after being tested negative. Upon hospitalisation, the patient developed fever and his physical condition deteriorated. He required high-flow oxygen to maintain breathing. On August 1, the hospital conducted another viral test for him. The result was positive. The patient was transferred to the isolation ward for further treatment. The current condition is serious. The source of the patient's infection is still under investigation, and 24 patients who had stayed in the same cubicle and about 20 healthcare staff were classified as close contacts and required isolation and quarantine. Their viral tests were negative to COVID-19 at this stage. The contact tracing is still on-going.

Together with the two previously confirmed patients (case numbers: 2604 and 2688) on July 24 and 25, respectively, a total of three patients in the same ward have tested positively for COVID-19 in the past nine days . It was confirmed that patients with case numbers 2604 and 2688 were tested positive for COVID-19 at the time of admission and were community acquired infections.

As a precautionary measure, admission and discharge of patients in the ward concerned has been suspended. The hospital is also conducting viral tests for all patients in the ward, and the results are negative.

The hospital has arranged thorough cleaning and disinfection in the relevant areas; strengthened the infection control support for various clinical and non-clinical departments; and reminding staff to wear masks at all times and avoid having meals with other colleagues. The hospital will continue to provide the necessary assistance to employees of departments concerned and continue to closely monitor the health of staff members and patients. It will also maintains communication with the Centre for Health Protection to follow up on the latest situation.