

## CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 1 263 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and 2 959 cases by RATs verified as well as 217 imported cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (August 12) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, August 12, the CHP was investigating 4 222 additional locally acquired cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, comprising 1 263 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (669 confirmed cases, 467 asymptomatic cases and 127 cases with pending status) and 2 959 cases that tested positive by rapid antigen tests (RATs) verified in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 217 additional imported cases were reported, including 193 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (25 confirmed cases, 109 asymptomatic cases and 59 cases with pending status) and 24 cases that tested positive by RATs.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 840 746 and 565 989 cases that have tested positive by nucleic acid tests and RATs respectively for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The CHP is continuing with epidemiological investigations of the cases. Please refer to the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)) for more information.

As of yesterday (August 11), among the specimens received by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch in the past seven days for verification testing of local cases, about 6.9 per cent and 12.5 per cent of them are related to the sub-lineages BA.2.12.1 and BA.4/BA.5 (including suspected cases) under the Omicron mutant strain respectively.

In addition, as of 0.00am, August 12, a total of 9 346 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 9 266 and 77 deaths reported from the Hospital Authority and public mortuaries respectively as well as three deaths reported from the Chinese University of Hong Kong Medical Centre. Hong Kong has so far recorded a total of 9 559 death cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Furthermore, among the earlier cases by nucleic acid tests reported, there were cases (including pending cases) changed to confirmed, asymptomatic or re-positive cases. As at yesterday, the total number of confirmed cases was 363 705, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and

pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 239 547, 31 and 236 007 respectively.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed that as the local situation of COVID-19 infection is still severe, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to continue to comply with social distancing measures, avoid going out and refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or gatherings. This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

The spokesman reminded the public that COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. They can provide effective protection to those vaccinated in preventing serious complications and even death after infection. People who have yet to receive vaccination, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, should get vaccinated as early as possible for self-protection and to reduce the risk of falling seriously ill and death should they get infected.

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## [Transcript of Q&A session at press conference on Government Programme on Tackling Hygiene Black Spots \(with photo/video\)](#)

The Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Cheuk Wing-hing, led representatives of various bureaux and departments to hold a press conference today (August 12) on the Government Programme on Tackling Hygiene Black Spots to be launched by the District Matters Co-ordination Task Force. Also joining were the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan; the Permanent Secretary for Housing/Director of Housing, Miss Agnes Wong; the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene, Ms Irene Young; the Director of Home Affairs, Mrs Alice Cheung; and the Director of Buildings, Ms Clarice Yu. Following is the transcript of question-and-answer session at the press conference:

Reporter: Good afternoon. So you mentioned quite a lot of measures and said you'll strengthen and enhance the efforts in tackling the hygiene black spots. But what's your target specifically, or to what extent do you aim to tackle this problem? Because Mr Cheuk said we need continuous efforts to tackle this, so can you tell us the specific goal that you want to achieve through this programme, and how will you measure the effectiveness or if there are really improvements or not. And about the manpower, Ms Young

mentioned you need more people to help tackling this problem, so how much manpower does this programme require and how will different departments define their labour and responsibilities? And lastly, about the goals in the second phase of this programme, what do you want to do to improve the cityscape? And is there another city that Hong Kong can (take) reference from in doing this and also improving hygiene? Thank you.

Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration: I will answer some of your questions and I will invite Ms Young to answer your question about manpower, although overall speaking I do have a feel of the resources requirement for the current campaign. My sense is that we are not talking about a huge amount of resources and if necessary the departments involved will put up their resource bids in the usual manner in the annual resource allocation exercise.

You ask about the target that we want to achieve. I mentioned in my opening remarks that we hope that after our phase one action, just for our phase one action, I'm not talking about the continuous improvement that will last, if you ask me, at least one to two years. After the first phase of operation we do hope the public will see some notable improvement around their usual place of work, their place of residence, and I don't think we can be very specific about, on a scale of 10, we hope we will raise the rating from say, five to 8.5, it's not like that. But I think people are familiar with the place they work or they live, and the public can easily tell. And I just want to share with you one example: My colleagues and I (because we are working on this hygiene improvement big operation), we went to Mong Kok to have a stroll down Fa Yuen Street, I don't know whether you're familiar with that place. There is an open bazaar there and we walked from Bute Street to Argyle Street, and we can tell the level of cleanliness has visibly improved. So although I was telling our journalist friends here that we will formally launch our campaign to target environmental hygiene black spots this Sunday, but actually our work has already started, because actually the work is ongoing, but we will formally start the campaign on Sunday.

And also you asked about how to measure the effectiveness. Of course there are different channels for us to get public feedback – we get feedback from the government hotline, we get feedback from the political parties, the district personalities and of course the media. So whether we need to put in place an index or a formal survey to measure our effectiveness, I think that we will consider that at a later stage. And I invite Ms Young to answer your question on FEHD (Food and Environmental Hygiene Department) manpower.

Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene: As I said earlier, in this financial year and the coming financial year, we have earmarked additional funding of \$500 million to enhance environmental hygiene services. We will use this amount of money to do several things, including enhancing our cleansing services, our rodent control services, and the cleansing jobs for public markets and hawker bazaars. For example, we will increase the number of enforcement task forces which are responsible for prosecution and enforcement work against illegal dumping of refuse. We will also increase the number of teams for clearing the illegally dumped refuse. According to our estimate, the number of people that we will add to our teams will amount to

about 2 000 over these two years.

Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration: I mentioned about improving our open space, improving our street furniture, and also improving our city landscape. For example, although we will start the second phase in October, we have already been in discussion with the relevant departments and we are seriously looking at, for example, some simple but effective means to improve our city landscape, such as replacing the old, perhaps rather dilapidated, road signs, street signs, and also for example, we are looking at introducing to the different districts new designs of the sewer covers. I think that when we go overseas sometimes we notice that you know, in some of the cities, the sewer covers are very beautifully designed. I think that is something we can do to enhance the attractiveness of Hong Kong.

And you also mentioned whether we are taking reference from any particular city. I don't think we need to. But of course, for example, from places like Shenzhen, I think the landscape architecture there is quite pleasing to the eye and I think that we will strive to achieve at least the same level of landscape architecture here. The beautification of city landscape will start in three months' time but I think the process will be longer. As you can well understand, for example if we do more plantation across the territory it will take time for trees to grow. But of course we can also in different districts improve our plantation, and also making the districts greener. That are the kind of things that we will do, and of course cleaning up. Part of it will be bringing out some of the character of individual streets, and we are also contemplating bringing in murals in different districts with different motifs – that should add to the character of individual districts or places.

Reporter: Three questions. Firstly, FEHD really is part of the problem, I would suggest. You've got the contractors in their trucks, that's probably dirty diesel trucks, they're idling the engines for hours, parking on the pavement, throwing cigarettes out the window. It's kind of a disgrace. And there's been a number of complaints that I've made about illegal garbage or whatever in various districts I've lived, where FEHD has completely failed to enforce even with very accurate information. And I just hear the same as what the Deputy Chief Secretary just said – time and time again is we will step up enforcement, we will remind people, we will do this, blah blah blah. So I'm not really hearing anything new here. So the first question is, you know, how is this actually going to make a difference?

Second question for the Deputy Chief Secretary. You talked of Mong Kok and you talked about a rating system. Now, I walked down Lai Chi Kok Road and Portland Street last night, Prince Edward, Mong Kok, and I would give that a rating of one out of 10 – and if you clean up all of the garbage there, then perhaps I would give it a three – because the problems are not just the garbage. The problems are the illegal construction, hoardings, the bamboo scaffolding, the hoardings which jut out into the pavement, the trucks and cars parked on the pavement, the smokers, the ashtrays that are overflowing. There are so many more problems. You're not going to solve that with a mural and a pretty manhole cover and a new sign. So how do you think really,

realistically, you're going to solve those problems? And they're going to need Transport (Department), Highways Department, many other departments to get involved. So what do you think about that? And the third question on the cameras, how many of those 300 cameras have actually caught people dumping garbage who are not in a vehicle, because the last time I asked that question about a year ago: zero. OK. Thank you.

Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration: Maybe I'll take your second question and I'll leave the first and third questions to be answered by Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene. I don't know whether it's fortunately or unfortunately, we walked down the different parts of Mong Kok in the past few days. But you can try to go to Fa Yuen Street, perhaps in the afternoon, and you'll see for yourself whether what I said was a kind of exaggeration. Although you didn't say that, but I think I was just telling this meeting that, actually, I didn't pick Fa Yuen Street because somebody told me that it is clean. It just so happened that I was in the vicinity and I decided that my colleague and I should take a look. But I thank you for bringing to our attention the conditions in Lai Chi Kok Road and Portland Street, and I can understand your frustration with the current situation. You already mentioned a whole host of questions. That involves maybe more than one department to clean up. I think one of the remits of our task force is to co-ordinate departmental action and, for the problems you highlighted, certainly we will see how we can do the operations more effectively and more sleekly. On the face of it, I am not sure that after our action, the rating, if there is one, will just go from up one to three. I hope we can do better, but I can't promise you how better can we go. But I'm sure this is something that we, I mean this kind of problem is something that we can resolve.

Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene: Our department attaches great importance to the way that our frontline workers and our supervisors carry out their duties. I notice that you have made a number of observations about how they are doing out there. I suggest that if you would like to give us more details then we would certainly look into each case and see if we can do something about that. As regards the 300 cameras that we put out, I think I do not have the exact figures here but I think apart from recording illegal activities, the cameras are also there to have a deterrent effect on people who might think that they could dump refuse just in the street. Maybe we can follow up and give you the information afterwards.

Reporter: Just one quick follow-up. I have actually made thousands of complaints as a citizen through 1823 forwarded to FEHD and had no response over the last few years. So when you say please contact us and we'll look into it, is it a new department? Is there new staff involved? Have people who neglected their duties been fired? I mean, why should I have any faith that anything is actually changed in the FEHD? Thank you.

Deputy Chief Secretary for Administration: I think if I understand it correctly, I think you can provide the information direct to the Director or to her department instead of going through 1823. And in fact, for one of the questions, I think the Director will look at is, I mean, you are telling us that thousands of your complaints were made to the government hotline without

any response. I think that is certainly one aspect we will have to look into.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)



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## CHP investigates two suspected food poisoning clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (August 12) investigating two suspected food poisoning clusters affecting eight persons, and reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent food-borne diseases.

The first cluster involved one male and two females, aged 15 to 52, who developed abdominal pain, diarrhoea, fever, nausea and vomiting, about 20 hours after consuming takeaway food purchased from a restaurant in Fo Tan on August 5.

The second cluster involved two males and three females, aged 26 to 54, who developed similar symptoms about 18.5 hours after consuming takeaway food provided by the same restaurant on August 8.

All the affected persons sought medical advice and one of them required hospitalisation. All of them are in stable condition.

To prevent food-borne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes, including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hot pot or barbecue meal;
- Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely

- during the cooking process;
- Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked food;
  - Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
  - Drink boiled water;
  - Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
  - Always wash hands before eating and after going to the toilet.
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## [CHP reports latest situation of imported malaria cases](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (August 12) reported the latest situation of imported malaria cases involving persons coming from Africa and said that follow-up investigation of the cases is continuing.

From July 1 to August 12 (as at 2pm), the CHP recorded a total of 97 imported malaria cases, with 84 of them arriving from Guinea and the remaining 13 from other places in Africa. Among these cases, 22 cases were recorded between August 6 (after 2pm) and August 12. As of noon on August 12, 27 patients infected with malaria were hospitalised in public hospitals. No new death or critical cases were recorded.

The CHP will continue to implement a series of measures to follow-up on the imported malaria cases. Together with medical staff of the Hospital Authority, the CHP conducted health screening at Hong Kong International Airport for persons arriving in Hong Kong who had visited Guinea recently. People suspected of being infected with malaria and with clinical needs were immediately sent to hospital for treatment. For the others, arrangement will be made for them to stay in quarantine facility, and those who develop symptoms will be sent to public hospital for treatment.

"The above measures can effectively prevent imported malaria cases from entering the community. The risk of local transmission of malaria is extremely low, yet members of the public should remain vigilant. There are effective drugs against malaria and Hong Kong has sufficient stock of the drugs but early diagnosis and prompt treatment are crucial for treating malaria. As such, strict environmental hygiene, mosquito control and personal protective measures remain the most effective means against malaria both locally and during travel," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Common symptoms of malaria include fever, chills, headache, muscle pain and weakness, cough, vomiting, diarrhoea and abdominal pain. Severe malaria is serious and potentially fatal without proper treatment.

Travellers are urged to be alert to the malaria risk of travel

destinations before departing and to take heed of the preventive measures below:

- Wear loose, light-coloured, long-sleeved tops and trousers, and use DEET-containing insect repellent on exposed parts of the body and clothing;
- Avoid using fragrant cosmetics or skin-care products and re-apply insect repellent according to instructions during outdoor activities;
- Before the trip, arrange a travel health consultation at least six weeks in advance for any extra measures against mosquito bites;
- During the trip, carry a portable bed net and apply permethrin (an insecticide) on it in rural endemic areas. Permethrin should not be applied to the skin; and
- After returning from malaria endemic areas, continue to apply insect repellent for 14 days.

The incubation period of malaria varies with different species of Plasmodium. This usually ranges from seven to 30 days but may be up to months or even longer after the bite of an infected Anopheline mosquito. Anyone feeling unwell after returning from a trip should seek medical advice as soon as possible and provide travel details to their doctor.

Members of the public should also prevent the accumulation of stagnant water and maintain good environmental hygiene:

- Change the water in vases once a week;
- Clear the water in saucers under potted plants every week;
- Cover water containers tightly;
- Ensure air-conditioner drip trays are free of stagnant water;
- Put all used cans and bottles into covered dustbins; and
- Store food and dispose of garbage properly.

Members of the public are reminded to make reports to government departments via the hotline 1823 if mosquito problems are detected, and may visit these pages for more information: the [malaria page of the CHP](#), the latest [Travel Health News](#), [tips for using insect repellents](#), the [CHP Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the FEHD's [Guidebook on Control and Prevention of Mosquito Breeding](#).

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## **[Health Bureau holds session on “Spirit of the President’s Important Speech” \(with photos\)](#)**

The Health Bureau today (August 12) held a session on "Spirit of the President's Important Speech" at the Central Government Offices. The



Secretary for Health, Professor Lo Chung-mau, spoke at the session, sharing with colleagues the spirit of the important speech delivered by President Xi Jinping at the meeting celebrating the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland and the inaugural ceremony of the sixth-term Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). Colleagues at middle and senior levels of the Health Bureau participated in person or online for an in-depth reflection on how to integrate the "four musts" and "four proposals" into the reform of the Bureau and healthcare system of Hong Kong.

President Xi raised in his important speech "four musts" for the new administration: it must fully and faithfully implement the principle of "one country, two systems"; it must uphold the Central Government's overall jurisdiction while securing the HKSAR's high degree of autonomy; it must ensure that Hong Kong is administered by patriots; and it must maintain Hong Kong's distinctive status and advantages. President Xi also laid down "four proposals" for the newly inaugurated Government, i.e. further improving its governance, continuing to create strong impetus for growth, earnestly addressing people's concerns and difficulties in daily life, and working together to safeguard harmony and stability.

Addressing the session, Professor Lo incorporated President Xi's "four proposals" into the future direction of the Health Bureau: "Government dominating; be bold and committed; leading the Greater Bay Area; be creative and innovative; improving the healthcare system; caring for all patients; seeking common ground while allowing differences; and winning mutually in the reforms". He said the Government should focus on safeguarding citizens' health and enhancing their happiness in daily life, building up a "Healthy Hong Kong" which can merge into the "Healthy China". He further added that President Xi's important speech not only provided crucial guidance on governance by the HKSAR Government in the coming five years, but also set out a high-level policy direction to achieve the targets.

Professor Lo said, "President Xi's important speech reflects in full his care, attention and support for the HKSAR, as well as the country's staunch and firm commitment to the full and faithful implementation of the principle of 'one country, two systems'. It is of great significance and meaning."

Lastly, Professor Lo encouraged colleagues of the Health Bureau to grasp the core essence of President Xi's important speech and build it into their own work, as well as continue to duly perform their duties in a pragmatic manner, keep seeking improvement and adopt a results-oriented approach, so that the Health Bureau can become a policy bureau of "active response" and "prompt action", and strive to meet the expectations of the Central Government and the general public.

