

## **Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 0.00am today (July 16), a total of 1 108 patients who tested positive for COVID-19 are currently hospitalised for treatment, including 158 new patients. Among the patients staying in isolation facilities, 327 patients are in isolation wards, 15 patients are in second-tier isolation wards and 389 patients are in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, of which 118 in total are new patients. There are two newly reported critical patients and two newly reported serious patients. There are a total of 20 patients in critical condition and 27 are in serious condition, of which four critical patients are receiving intensive care. Moreover, there are 129 patients who have recovered, including 120 patients who have been discharged. In addition, one patient who passed away in public hospital was reported.

In the fifth wave of the epidemic, there are 53 453 patients who have recovered so far, including 53 200 patients who have been discharged. And since early 2020, there are 65 833 patients who have recovered, including 65 580 patients who have been discharged.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

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## **CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 1 408 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and 2 125 cases by RATs verified as well as 229 imported cases**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (July 16) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, July 16, the CHP was investigating 3 533 additional locally acquired cases tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, including 1 408 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests (593 confirmed cases, 683 asymptomatic cases and 132 cases with pending case status) and 2 125 cases tested positive by

rapid antigen tests (RATs) verified in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 229 additional imported cases were reported, including 214 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests (six confirmed cases, 143 asymptomatic cases and 65 cases with pending case status) and 15 cases tested positive by RATs.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 794 811 and 496 039 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 on the cases. Please refer to the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)) for more information.

Meanwhile, according to the analysis by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch, as of yesterday (July 15), Hong Kong had recorded a total of 19 cases, 1 101 cases and 916 cases carrying the sub-lineages BA.2.12, BA.2.12.1 and BA.4/BA.5 under the Omicron mutant strain respectively (including suspected cases), among which zero, 874 and 252 of them are local cases.

In addition, as of 0.00am, July 16, a total of 9 220 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 9 142 and 75 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 9 433 death cases that have 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 344 780, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 215 759, 24 and 232 626 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 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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## **Update on cluster of Multi-drug Resistant Acinetobacter cases in Pok Oi Hospital**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement on a cluster of patients confirmed to be carriers of Multi-drug Resistant Acinetobacter (MDRA) in a medicine and geriatrics ward, the spokesperson for Pok Oi Hospital gave the following update today (July 16):

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In accordance with the prevailing guidelines, the hospital commenced contact tracing and confirmed two more male patients (aged 59 and 66) as carriers of MDRA. The two patients are currently hospitalised under isolation and are in stable and serious condition respectively.

The following enhanced infection control measures have continued to be implemented according to the established guidelines:

1. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of the ward concerned;
2. Application of stringent contact precautions and enhanced hand hygiene for staff and patients; and
3. Enhanced patient and environmental screening procedures.

The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up. The hospital will continue to closely monitor the situation of the ward concerned.

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## **Update on supplies from Mainland**

The Task Force on Supplies from the Mainland led by the Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB) has been working closely with the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government to explore various means to stabilise the supply of goods from the Mainland to Hong Kong.

A spokesperson for the TLB said that the "Sea Express" water transportation service from the Mainland to Hong Kong has been fully launched and its capacity is rising to increase the supplies of fresh food, other

daily necessities and manufacturing materials. The current supply of fresh food from the Mainland is stable.

The spokesperson said today (July 16) that Shenzhen operated 38 cargo vessel trips and transported around 4 180 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of cross-boundary supplies by water yesterday (July 15), equivalent to about 18 350 tonnes of goods, all of which were non-fresh food, according to information from the Mainland authorities.

Since the launch of services from the three ports in Shenzhen since February 18 to yesterday, a total of around 673 270 TEUs of cross-boundary supplies have been transported, equivalent to about 3 281 670 tonnes of goods, of which around 2 100 TEUs (about 17 910 tonnes) were fresh food and around 671 170 TEUs (about 3 263 760 tonnes) were non-fresh food.

Meanwhile, to avoid a spillover of the epidemic, the Transport Department (TD) arranges for dedicated staff to conduct rapid nucleic acid tests, using nasopharyngeal swabs for specimen collection, for cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers at various land boundary control points. Only drivers with a negative result are allowed to enter the Mainland. A total of 3 941 rapid nucleic acid tests were conducted yesterday, among which 11 cases that tested preliminarily positive or indeterminate were found. The TD has passed the cases to the Department of Health for follow-up.

The TLB will closely monitor the situation and co-operate with the Mainland authorities to facilitate and implement various measures to ensure both smooth cross-boundary land transport and a stable goods supply to Hong Kong, while reducing the risk of epidemic transmission in both the Mainland and Hong Kong.

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## **Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” in Kai Chun House, Kai Chuen Court, Wong Tai Sin**

The Government today (July 16) exercised the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to make a "restriction-testing declaration" (declaration) effective from 5pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Wong Tai Sin (i.e. Kai Chun House, Kai Chuen Court, Wong Tai Sin, excluding car park on Basement 1, shops on G/F and non-domestic unit on 1/F, see Annex)

are required to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing. Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the "restricted area" have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. The Government aims at finishing this exercise at around 10.30am tomorrow (July 17). The operation may be extended depending on the test results.

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. Having reviewed a basket of factors, including the viral load in sewage, the information of relevant positive cases, and other circumstantial factors, and conducted a risk assessment, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 11pm today. Arrangements will be made for persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo a nucleic acid test at specimen collection stations where dedicated staff will collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs. Persons subject to compulsory testing must stay at their place of residence until all test results are ascertained to avoid cross-infection risk. The Government will make arrangement to facilitate specimen collection for people with impaired mobility. All persons in the "restricted area" who have tested positive in the past 14 days, including positive cases identified either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests that have been self-declared to the DH, are not required to undergo testing in this compulsory testing exercise.

The Government spokesman said, "We understand that this exercise will cause inconvenience to the public. The Government has made arrangements to carry out testing for all persons present in the 'restricted area' as soon as possible. The aim is to strive to complete testing of all identified persons subject to compulsory testing and confirm the results, and finish the exercise at around 10.30am tomorrow. The Government will make a public announcement when the declaration expires officially. In the cases in which employees are unable to go to work because of the declaration, the Government hopes their employers can exercise discretion and not deduct the salaries or benefits of the employees."

If staying in the "restricted area" will cause unreasonable hardship to individuals who are not residents in the area when the declaration takes effect, government officers may exercise discretion and allow that person to leave the area after considering the individual circumstances. That person must have followed the instructions to undergo testing and leave his/her personal information for contact purposes.

According to the compulsory testing notice to be issued today, any persons other than those specified above who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from July 10 to July 16, 2022, even if they were not present in the "restricted area" at the time when the declaration took effect, must undergo compulsory testing on or before July 18, 2022. As a

mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

The Government will provide food packs for persons subject to compulsory testing, so as to facilitate the meal arrangements of some persons subject to compulsory testing. In addition, the Rating and Valuation Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 6075 4808) which started operation at 5pm today for residents restricted by the declaration to make enquiries and seek assistance. The Social Welfare Department will also provide assistance to the affected persons.

The Government appeals to persons subject to compulsory testing for their full co-operation by registering and undergoing testing, and waiting for the results patiently at home. The Government will strictly follow up on whether the persons concerned have complied with the compulsory testing notices and "restriction-testing declaration". Any person who fails to comply with the compulsory testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$10,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the "restriction-testing declaration" is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.