

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (January 30), 23 patients who had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus (case numbers: 12857, 12893, 12901, 12905, 12917, 12939, 12955, 12978, 12979, 12986, 13003, 13012, 13036, 13038, 13056, 13058, 13059, 13071, 13089, 13118, 13144, 13639 and 13752) were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 12 753 patients have been discharged.

A total of 1 002 patients who had tested positive are currently hospitalised in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, the Hospital Authority (HA) Infectious Disease Centre, the Community Treatment Facility at AsiaWorld-Expo and 12 public hospitals. All of them are in stable condition.

The HA 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.

CHP investigates 66 confirmed and 15 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 30) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 30, the CHP was investigating 66 additional confirmed cases and 15 additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 81 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) in those 24 hours), while an earlier tested positive case (case 13752) turned out to be a re-positive case after investigation. This brings the total number of confirmed cases to 13 679 so far, while the figures for asymptomatic cases and re-positive cases recorded since January 1 are 418 and eight respectively, i.e. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 14 105 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of four imported cases, 15 local cases and 62 cases epidemiologically linked with previous cases. Seventy-two of the cases involve mutant strains, the mutation test results of seven cases are

pending and the viral load of the remaining two cases is insufficient for mutation tests. The patients comprise 40 males and 41 females, aged ten-month-old to 84. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk). Case status and classification may be subject to changes when there is new information available during epidemiological investigation and latest information is shown on "COVID-19 Thematic Website".

As at 4pm today, a total of 994 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (January 16 to 29). Six-hundred-and-six of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases/possibly import-related, 52 are local cases, 147 are cases epidemiologically linked with local case, and the rest are imported cases.

Separately, to stop the potential risk of further spread of the virus, the CHP has arranged/will arrange the residents concerned of the following buildings, where cases suspectedly related to environmental factors (including vertical/horizontal transmission and adjacent yard area) were detected, to undergo quarantine at quarantine centre:

- Yung Lai House, Yau Lai Estate, Yau Tong (involving three cases at a room 26 and one case at another room 26 on an upper floor): residents of room 26 on 36th to 39th floor;
- Yam Yue House, Shek Yam East Estate, Kwai Chung (involving one case at a room 06 and one case at another room 06 on an upper floor): residents of room 06 and 07 on 2nd to 8th floor;
- Tower 2, Tivoli Garden, Tsing Yi (involving six cases at a unit E and one case at another unit E on an upper floor): residents of unit D and E on 26th to 32th floor;

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for cases with mutant strains, persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on specified dates in accordance with the announcement by the DH. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day (see the details of the buildings and dates of testing at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf).

The CHP strongly reminded members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo the multiple tests on time as required. The compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. The Government will seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. 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 order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months. Relevant officers of different government departments are

empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). The Government reiterates that the aim of issuing a compulsory testing notice is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community as soon as possible to protect overall public health and safety.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed that the global situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and there is a continuous increase in the number of cases involving mutant strains that carry higher transmissibility. With the higher transmissibility and risk of infection of the Omicron mutant strain, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to continue to comply with the recently tightened social distancing measures, and to refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or gatherings (particularly religious or cross-family activities and gatherings). This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

Government makes “restriction-testing declaration” and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified “restricted area” at Shek Lei (II) Estate in Kwai Chung

The Government today (January 30) 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 8pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Kwai Chung (i.e. Shek Wah House, Shek Lei (II) Estate, Kwai Chung, excluding Yan Chai Hospital Artiste Training Alumni Association Care & Attention Home on G/F and 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 about 7am tomorrow (January 31).

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing

declaration'. As the sewage discharged from the above building was tested positive for COVID-19, it is suspected that there are asymptomatic patients in the building. Given the risk of infection in the relevant area is assessed to be likely higher, the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government has set up temporary specimen collection stations at the "restricted area" and requested persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 1am tomorrow. Arrangements have been 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 arrange for door-to-door specimen collection for people with impaired mobility.

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 7am 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 person who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from January 17 to January 30, 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 February 1. As mutant strain is involved, and having considered relevant infection risks, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested, are also required to undergo testing.

The Housing Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2489 0020) which has started operation at 8pm 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 \$5,000. 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 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Acting Senior Taxation Officer of Inland Revenue Department preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19

The Inland Revenue Department today (January 30) learnt that an acting Senior Taxation Officer who works on the 13th floor of Revenue Tower has preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19.

The officer felt unwell on January 27 and underwent testing for COVID-19 on the following day. She has preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19 yesterday (January 29). The officer concerned is responsible for internal clerical work without the need to have contacts with the public. She had worn masks and followed relevant disease prevention measures at work. She last worked in the office on January 28. There is no service counter for members of the public on the 13th floor.

The department has completed thorough cleaning and sterilisation on the 13th floor of Revenue Tower in accordance with the Centre for Health Protection's (CHP) advice, and will arrange for staff of that floor to undergo COVID-19 testing.

During the situation of COVID-19 infection, the department has been strictly implementing disease prevention measures. The department will continue to maintain close liaison with the CHP, actively co-operate with the CHP's quarantine arrangements and remind its staff to pay attention to personal hygiene and stay vigilant.

Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in To Kwa Wan

The Government today (January 30) 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 8pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in To Kwa Wan (i.e. No. 18, 20 Yin On Street and No. 17, 19, Tsun Fat Street, To Kwa Wan, excluding the shops on the G/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 about 7am tomorrow (January 31).

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As some cases tested positive who have lived in the abovementioned building were detected recently, and the test results involved mutant strain, the risk of infection in the relevant area is assessed to be likely higher, so the Government decided to make a 'restriction-testing declaration' for the relevant area."

The Government will arrange dedicated staff to collect samples through combined nasal and throat swabs at the "restricted area" and request persons subject to compulsory testing to undergo testing before 10.30pm tonight. 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 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 7am 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 person who had been present at the above building for more than two hours from January 23, 2022 to January 30, 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 February 1, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, and having considered relevant infection risks, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons and persons who have recently been tested are also required to undergo testing.

In addition, in accordance with the latest arrangement, persons who resided in the same building as the case involving a mutant strain are required to undergo compulsory testing on days 2, 3, 4 and 7 counting from the day subsequent to that when the case last stayed in that building before being admitted to hospital for treatment or leaving Hong Kong.

The Kowloon City District Office has set up a hotline (Tel: 9255 1846) which starts operation at 8pm tonight 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 \$5,000. 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 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.