

A male police constable preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19

A 26-year-old male police constable who is posted to the District Investigation Team of Tsuen Wan District, preliminarily tested positive for the COVID-19. He resides in Ying Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate and was arranged for COVID-19 test. He was preliminarily tested positive for COVID-19 today (January 22). He has no travel history in the past 14 days. He wore face masks during his tour of duty. His last working day was January 20.

Police are highly concerned and have the following messages:

(1) While awaiting further assessment and recommendation by the Department of Health (DH), all police officers and civilian staff who might have been in contact with the officer concerned have been arranged to undergo COVID-19 test as instructed by the DH;

(2) All facilities in the office concerned have been sterilised;

(3) All officers have been reminded to reduce social contact to minimise risks of infection, and to pay attention to physical health. If feeling unwell, they should consult a doctor and report the case immediately;

(4) Police will deploy resources flexibly to ensure provision of policing services of the areas concerned remains unaffected.

Police will maintain close communication with the DH and provide assistance in tracing the pathology, by proactively providing information such as the duty record and roster of the officer concerned. Arrangements will be made for close contacts to be conveyed to quarantine centres to undergo quarantine.

No need to return to offices for government employees residing in Kwai Chung Estate

In view of the latest development of the epidemic, the Government has informed all bureaux and departments (B/Ds) today (January 22) that all government employees residing in Kwai Chung Estate do not need to return to their offices but to stay at home and avoid going out for the time being

until receiving further notice from their respective B/Ds.

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, appealed to employers to make similar arrangements for their staff where practicable in the fight against the epidemic.

He said that to cater for the implementation of various epidemic prevention measures, taking into consideration the scale and manpower requirement of individual operations, the Government will provide cross-departmental support by making suitable deployment of staff from B/Ds.

The Civil Service Bureau has earlier informed B/Ds that on the premise of maintaining public services, B/Ds can make appropriate manpower arrangements according to their own circumstances so as to reduce people flow in offices.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (January 22), 27 patients who had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus (case numbers: 12544, 12568, 12581, 12631, 12654, 12675, 12685, 12729, 12732, 12734, 12741, 12744, 12748, 12753, 12767, 12771, 12781, 12784, 12815, 12849, 12869, 12879, 12915, 12932, 12933, 12974 and 13000) were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 12 541 patients have been discharged.

A total of 330 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 two 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 14 confirmed and 12 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases and identifies 11 additional Omicron cases from previously announced cases and updates environmental samples results of relevant pet shops

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 22) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 22, the CHP was investigating 14 additional confirmed cases and 12 additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 26 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) in those 24 hours). This brings the total number of confirmed cases to 12 932 so far, while the figures for asymptomatic cases and re-positive cases recorded since January 1 are 210 and four respectively, i.e. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 13 146 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of one imported case, 19 cases epidemiologically linked with imported cases, three local cases, and three cases epidemiologically linked with local cases. Twenty-five of the cases involve mutant strains, and the mutation test result of one case is pending. The patients comprise 14 males and 12 females, aged nine-month-old to 88. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

A total of 255 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (January 8 to 21). Eighty-two of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases, six are local cases, seven are cases epidemiologically linked with local case, and the rest are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the whole genome sequencing analysis of cases announced earlier conducted by the PHLSB confirmed that cases 12971, 13052, 13054, 13055, 13057, 13058, 13062, 13068, 13076, 13085 and 13090 all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. Together with the aforementioned cases, there are so far 517 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

The CHP is following up on cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 related to pet shops. As of today, 9 cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 are related to pet shops, which are 13047, 13059, 13073, 13110, 13118, 13120, 13123, 13124 and 13151. Epidemiological investigations on the cases are ongoing. As at January 22 evening, CHP has collected a total of 738 environmental samples

from relevant pet shops and relevant warehouses, in which a total of 34 environmental samples tested positive. The latest laboratory testing results revealed that environmental samples collected from one additional pet shop (I Love Rabbit at 160 Tung Choi Street, Mong Kok) and one additional warehouse (I Love Rabbit at 27B Lee Garden Road, Causeway Bay) also tested positive. As a prudent measure, the newly added venues above will be included in a compulsory testing notice. Specified persons who were present at the relevant venues from January 7 to January 18 need to undergo compulsory testing on the specified date(s). The staff members of the two venues above will be arranged to undergo compulsory quarantine at the quarantine centre.

Also, as a passenger flight (ET608) operated by Ethiopian Airlines from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Bangkok, Thailand, arriving in Hong Kong on January 19 had one passenger who tested positive upon arrival, and two passengers who failed to comply with the requirements specified under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H), the DH thus invoked Cap. 599H to prohibit the landing of passenger flights from Addis Ababa and Bangkok operated by Ethiopian Airlines in Hong Kong from January 22 to February 4.

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.

With the higher transmissibility and risk of infection of the Omicron mutant strain, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to comply with the

recently tightened social distancing measures in the next two weeks, 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.

â€‹The spokesman for the CHP stressed, "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, and there are also reports of breakthrough infections in some vaccinated individuals. The CHP strongly urges members of the public to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong, in particular to specified places with high risk under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H)."

Princess Margaret Hospital announces two staff members tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesman for Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) made the following announcement today (January 22) regarding two patient care assistants (PCA) who tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19:

A 47-year-old PCA of PMH had the onset of mild throat discomfort on January 20. She attended the Accident and Emergency Department of Yan Chai Hospital yesterday night (January 21) due to sore throat. Her COVID-19 test result was preliminarily positive. The PCA is being treated in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre with stable condition.

The PCA concerned lives in Ying Kwai House in Kwai Chung Estate and works at the Antenatal Ward under the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department of PMH. She is responsible for assisting nurses in healthcare procedures. She does not perform any high-risk clinical procedures and is equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment at work.

On the night of January 20, the PCA concerned had a brief chat in a pantry with another 58-year-old PCA who works at the same ward. During the chat, the first PCA did not wear a mask while the other PCA wore the mask all along. The 58-year-old PCA later tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19 and is being isolated at the Hospital Authority Infectious Disease Centre located at PMH with stable condition.

The hospital's infection control team has conducted contact tracing.

Eleven staff members are classified as close contacts at this moment and required to quarantine. Twenty inpatients in the ward concerned tested negative for COVID-19. No patients are classified as close contacts.

Admission to the ward concerned and discharge have been suspended. Thorough cleaning and disinfection has been arranged. PMH will continue to communicate with the Centre for Health Protection on the latest situation.