

CHP reminds relevant residents to comply with “restriction-testing declaration” operations on one case tested positive and three cases tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 18) reminded members of the public that "restriction-testing declarations" (RTDs) have been made for the residences of one case tested positive and three of the cases tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus the CHP is following up. The CHP strongly reminds relevant residents that they must comply with the RTD operations. Any person who fails to present an SMS notification with a test result or wear a wristband as proof of having undergone testing breaches the compulsory testing notice and may be liable to a fine of \$5,000. The person will also be issued with a compulsory testing order, requiring him/her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the compulsory testing order or the RTD is an offence and the offender may be liable to a fine of level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

The case that tested positive (case 13059) and one case that tested preliminarily positive (a 73-year-old male) involve two members of a family who live in Ka Sing House, Ka Lung Court, Aberdeen. Case 13059 involves a 67-year-old female who visited Little Boss pet shop in Causeway Bay on January 8 and had contact with case 13047. Her 73-year-old family member living together developed symptoms on January 17 and he tested preliminarily positive after admission in hospital on the same day.

As case 13059 had contact with case 13047 at Little Boss pet shop in Causeway Bay, the CHP is now arranging all customers who had contact with case 13047 at the pet shop during the period from January 7 to 15 to undergo compulsory quarantine at a quarantine centre. About 140 transactions were involved. Also, with regard to the positive testing result for SARS-CoV-2 virus of some of the hamster samples taken by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department at the pet shop, the CHP is now following up with the shop and will contact relevant customers who have bought hamsters from that shop on or after January 7 as soon as possible to arrange them to undergo compulsory quarantine.

The second case that tested preliminarily positive involves a 26-year-old female living in 72-74 Broadway, Mei Foo Sun Chuen Phase 3, Lai Chi Kok. She worked as a teacher in Learning Habitat Kindergarten (Novum East) in Quarry Bay and last went to work on January 15. She developed symptoms since

January 16 and consulted a private doctor on January 17. Her sample collected at a community testing centre on the same day tested preliminarily positive.

The third case that tested preliminarily positive involves a 16-year-old male living in Tower 1, Monterey Cove, Caribbean Coast Phase 1, Tung Chung. He studied in Delia Memorial School (Broadway), 80-86 Broadway, Mei Foo and is a classmate of case 13069 announced today. He had examination in the same classroom at the school with case 13069 from January 10 to 14. He developed symptoms on January 16 and attended the Accident and Emergency Department in a public hospital on January 17 and tested preliminarily positive on the same day.

The Government has made RTDs tonight for the buildings where the patients resided (Ka Sing House, Ka Lung Court, Aberdeen; 72-74 Broadway, Mei Foo Sun Chuen Phase 3, Lai Chi Kok; and Tower 1, Monterey Cove, Caribbean Coast Phase 1, Tung Chung) and persons who resided or worked at the buildings will be subject to increased compulsory testing frequency. The places where the patients had visited during the incubation periods will also be included in a compulsory testing notice. Specified persons who were present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on the specified date.

The spokesman for the CHP said, "The Government has remained vigilant and has been closely monitoring the latest scientific data on mutant strains as well as the epidemic situation of various places. The most stringent anti-epidemic measures will be implemented to prevent the mutant strains from spreading in the local community."

At the moment, the adverse impact on the epidemic situation caused by the newly emerged mutant strains is not fully known yet, but vaccination is still essential to prevent severe cases and deaths from COVID-19 infection. The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk).

Government tightens boarding and quarantine requirements for places with Omicron cases detected

The Government announced today (January 18) that in view of the latest global developments of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, Honduras will be specified as a Group A specified place from 0.00am on January 21 to tighten the boarding and quarantine requirements for relevant inbound travellers.

To manage and prevent the importation risks posed by Omicron cases, the Government continues to employ the most stringent measures to guard against importation of cases. Overseas places where Omicron cases have been detected that may lead to local transmission and exportation of cases will be specified as Group A specified places. Noting that the detection of Omicron cases was confirmed in Honduras, the Government will specify it as a Group A specified place from 0.00am on January 21. Non-Hong Kong residents who have stayed there within 21 days will not be allowed to enter Hong Kong. Hong Kong residents can only board a flight for Hong Kong if they have been fully vaccinated and hold a recognised vaccination record. They will have to undergo compulsory quarantine in a designated quarantine hotel for 21 days upon returning to Hong Kong, with six tests to be conducted during quarantine, followed by compulsory testing in a community testing centre on the 26th day of arrival in Hong Kong.

Details on the relevant boarding and compulsory quarantine requirements for respective specified places can be found at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/inbound-travel.html.

The Government will gazette the relevant updated specifications under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to effect the above measures.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (January 18), 30 patients who had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus (case numbers: 12526, 12576, 12604, 12609, 12615, 12622, 12623, 12628, 12635, 12637, 12642, 12663, 12690, 12693, 12696, 12701, 12704, 12707, 12720, 12725, 12759, 12764, 12768, 12782, 12792, 12814, 12816, 12898, 12920 and 12931) were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 12 446 patients have been discharged.

A total of 353 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 and the Community Treatment Facility at AsiaWorld-Expo. 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 six confirmed and 12 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases and identifies 26 additional Omicron cases from previously announced cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 18) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 18, the CHP was investigating six additional confirmed cases and 12 additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 18 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 12 873 so far and starting from January 1 recorded, with 190 asymptomatic cases and three re-positive cases. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 13 066 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of seven imported cases, 10 cases epidemiologically linked with imported cases, and one case epidemiologically linked with local case. Sixteen of the cases involve mutant strains, while the mutation test results of the remaining two cases are pending. The patients comprise 10 males and eight females, aged 1 to 67. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

The 10 cases epidemiologically linked with imported cases are 13056 (46-year-old female, who is a household contact of case 13014) and 13063 to 13071 (six males and three females, aged 1 to 46). The nine patients are close contacts of case 13045, including five family members living together (cases 13064, 13067, and 13069 to 13071). The case epidemiologically linked with local case is 13059 (67-year-old female, who visited Little Boss pet shop in Causeway Bay on January 8 and had contact with case 13047).

A total of 326 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (January 4 to 17). Sixty-five of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases/possibly import-related cases, three are local cases, and the rest are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the whole genome sequencing analysis of cases announced earlier conducted by the PHLSB confirmed that cases 12800, 12807, 12810, 12817, 12870, 12944, 12996, 13003, 13005 to 13007, 13016, 13018, 13020, 13023 to 13027, 13029 to 13031, 13033, 13034, 13041 and 13045 all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. Together with the aforementioned cases, there are

so far 479 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

Also, as the passenger flights (AY101) operated by Finnair arriving in Hong Kong from Helsinki, Finland, within a seven-day period (January 11 to 17) had four passengers who tested positive upon arrival, the DH thus invoked the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to prohibit the landing of passenger flights from Helsinki operated by Finnair in Hong Kong from January 18 to 31.

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.

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)."

Tender awarded for site in Fanling

The Lands Department announced today (January 18) that the tender for a site, Fanling Sheung Shui Town Lot No. 245 at On Kui Street, Fanling, New Territories, has been awarded to the highest tenderer, Ample Skill Limited (parent company: Chevalier International Holdings Limited), on a 50-year land grant at a premium of \$297,400,000.

The tenderers, other than the successful tenderer, in alphabetical order, with the name of the parent company where provided by the tenderer in brackets, were:

- (1) Charmfield Pacific Limited (K. Wah Properties (Holdings) Limited); and
- (2) Dynasty Rise Limited (Sino Land Company Limited).

Fanling Sheung Shui Town Lot No. 245 has a site area of about 1,631.3 square metres and the permissible uses are as follows: industrial; godown and ancillary office; office in direct support of an industrial operation; information technology and telecommunications industries; research, design and development centre; audio-visual recording studio; media design and media production; workshop for laundering, dry cleaning, tailoring or repair of goods; art studio; vehicle repair workshop, vehicle inspection centre or vehicle testing centre; cargo handling and forwarding facilities; showroom ancillary to factory; motor vehicle showroom on the ground floor; laboratory, inspection and testing centre; recyclable collection centre; public vehicle park; and a combination of any of the permissible uses. The minimum gross floor area and the maximum gross floor area are 4,893.9 sq m and 8,156.5 sq m respectively, both excluding the gross floor area of the public vehicle park to be constructed by the purchaser under the Conditions of Sale.