

## [DH calls on community including ethnic minorities to fight Omicron variant threat together \(with photos\)](#)

In response to the recent worsening of the local COVID-19 epidemic situation, with local infection cases also involving several foreign domestic helpers, the Department of Health (DH) today (January 12) appealed again to all sectors of the community, including ethnic minorities (EMs), to continue to work with the Government on its enhanced prevention and control work. To fight the Omicron variant threat together, the Government called on the public to closely pay heed to and follow the Government's prevention and control measures, testing arrangements, and to observe good personal hygiene and receive COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible.

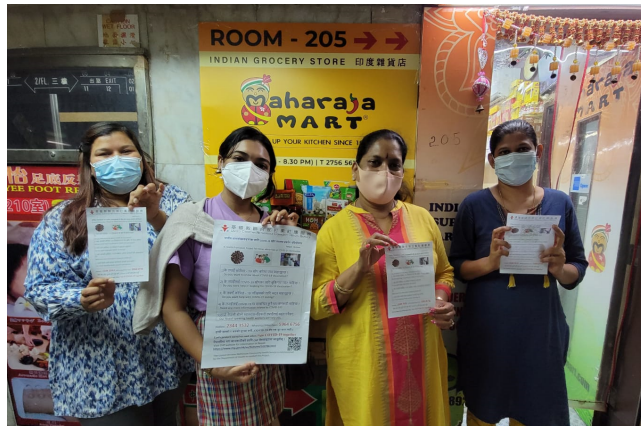
As at January 11, a total of 35 cases were recorded in the EM large cluster involving community transmission of the Omicron variant, including four foreign domestic helpers who are confirmed or suspected cases of the Omicron variant.

The DH has always attached great importance to communication and connections with EMs. This provides timely and important epidemic information to EMs, such as the recent information series on "Do our part to fight the Omicron variant", "Tips for prevention of COVID-19 for foreign domestic helpers", "Recommendation for the third dose COVID-19 vaccination", "Social distancing measures under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance", "Appeal for virus testing" and "Understanding compulsory testing notices" on the thematic websites on COVID-19 ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)) and the COVID-19 vaccination programme([www.covidvaccine.gov.hk](http://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk)), or on the Facebook page of the Centre for Health Protection ([www.facebook.com/CentreforHealthProtection](http://www.facebook.com/CentreforHealthProtection)). In addition, the DH also maintains close contact with various stakeholders, including relevant Government bureaux and departments, relevant Consulates-General, employment agencies for foreign domestic helpers, EM groups, relevant support organisations and religious groups, with a view to communicating relevant health information through their channels.

Recently, the DH has been working with non-governmental organisations in producing a series of short videos and audio clips in different EM languages featuring invited representatives of local EM groups in a bid to allay EM groups' worries about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines and remind them to keep abreast of the news of the Omicron variant. The materials are disseminated through the thematic website and social media, e.g. the Facebook page of the Centre for Health Protection of the DH. Moreover, the DH has also arranged for relevant anti-epidemic information to be published in local newspapers and broadcast in radio programmes for EMs, including those in Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi (the Indian language), Nepali, Thai and Urdu (the Pakistan language).

Currently, the thematic website on COVID-19 ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)) and the COVID-19 vaccination programme website ([www.covidvaccine.gov.hk](http://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk)) provide information in nine EM languages (Hindi, Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog, Nepali, Urdu, Thai, Bengali, Sinhala and Vietnamese). Selected materials have also been translated into French, Spanish, Punjabi and Tamil.

All along, the DH has been committed to disseminating timely anti-epidemic information to all sectors in society, including EMs. The DH appeals to members of the public to receive COVID-19 vaccination and get influenza vaccines as soon as possible, and support the Government's anti-epidemic work by reducing unnecessary social contacts, such as avoiding crowded places and social gatherings, and staying home as much as possible to minimise the risk of spreading the disease.



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## [CHP reminds relevant residents to comply with “restriction-testing declaration” operation on two cases tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 12) reminded members of the public that "restriction-testing declaration" (RTD) have been made for the residences of two 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 first case involves a 19-year-old male patient. According to the patient, he is a family member of case 12913 not living together and claimed to be living in Maya Tower 1, 8 Shung Shan Street, Yau Tong. He is a student at Hong Kong Tang King Po College and last went to school on January 7. He developed symptoms on January 11 and went to a community testing centre on the same day for test and tested preliminarily positive, with a Ct value of less than 30. He had not received COVID-19 vaccination.

The second case involves a 20-year-old male patient living in Pik Long House, Shek Pai Wan Estate, Aberdeen. He is a student at the University of Hong Kong and last went to school in mid-December last year. He also works part-time in Dustykid Tea Shop – Light as Dust in Sheung Wan and Wan Chai and last went to work on January 6. He went to a community testing centre on January 11 for test in accordance with the relevant compulsory testing notice and tested preliminarily positive. He developed symptoms on January 8 with a Ct value of less than 30. He received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) on August 4 and August 25, 2021 in Hong Kong.

The CHP's preliminary investigation revealed that he visited the Nabe Urawa at Hysan Place in Causeway Bay for dinner in the evening on January 4 and that earlier cases 12838 and 12882 also dined in the restaurant at similar time. The CHP suspected that his infection may be related to cases 12838 and 12882. The CHP also appealed to those who had dined in the Nabe Urawa at Hysan Place in Causeway Bay after 6pm on January 4 to call the CHP's hotlines at 2125 1111 or 2125 1122 to facilitate the CHP's epidemiological investigations and contact tracing.

The CHP is now investigating the places where the patients visited during incubation periods and will carry out whole genome sequencing analysis in order to ascertain the infection sources and to terminate the silent transmission chains in the community. The CHP also urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with exposure to infection risk, to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons.

The Government has made "restriction-testing declaration" tonight for the buildings where the patients resided (Maya Tower 1, 8 Shung Shan Street, Yau Tong; and Pik Long House, Shek Pai Wan Estate, Aberdeen) and persons who resided or worked at the buildings will be subject to increased compulsory testing frequency. The places where they 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](http://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk)).

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## **Advisory Panel on COVID-19 Vaccines convenes meeting to conduct continuous benefit-risk analysis of authorised COVID-19 vaccines**

The Advisory Panel on COVID-19 Vaccines (Advisory Panel) convened a meeting today (January 12) to conduct continuous benefit-risk analysis of the authorised COVID-19 vaccines. The meeting was chaired by convenor Professor Wallace Lau Chak-sing.

At the meeting today, the Advisory Panel reviewed the continuous benefit-risk balance of the two authorised vaccines. After reviewing all the latest clinical and safety data related to the Comirnaty and Sinovac vaccines (including safety reports submitted by the authorisation applicants), the Advisory Panel considered that there was no new significant safety signal identified, though continuous monitoring was still required. The quality of the Comirnaty and Sinovac vaccines imported has already passed the certification and appropriate testing for quality control. In summary, the Advisory Panel still considered that the benefits of the two vaccines outweighed the risks, and that there was no need to recommend changes regarding the use of the two vaccines.

The Advisory Panel will submit the relevant views to the Secretary for Food and Health (SFH) for consideration. The information concerned will be uploaded to the website of the Food and Health Bureau later on.

Regarding the administration of the Comirnaty vaccine on children aged five to 11, the Advisory Panel noted that application on a paediatric vial packaging for children aged five to 11 (i.e. 10mcg per dose) is still pending. Having reviewed the relevant efficacy and safety data published, the Advisory Panel suggested allowing children aged five to 11 to receive a

fractional dose (i.e. one-third of a dose) of the Comirnaty vaccine for adults for "off-label use" and to make reference to the recommendations of relevant scientific committees for implementing the vaccination programme.

Having regard to the current and anticipated epidemic situation, the Advisory Panel recommended that the Government should provide the relevant information to the Joint Scientific Committees (Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases) under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health for consideration on whether and how fractional dose (i.e. one-third of a dose) of the Comirnaty vaccine for adults should be administered to children aged five to 11, with a view to facilitating the timely extension of the Comirnaty vaccine to the relevant age groups.

"The Government will continue to follow up with Fosun Pharma on extending the age eligibility of the Comirnaty vaccine to cover children aged five to 11. The Government will also continue to ensure that the authorised vaccines satisfy the criteria of safety, efficacy and quality, and continue to disseminate the latest safety and scientific information on the relevant vaccines to the public and relevant stakeholders in a timely manner," a Government spokesman said.

The SFH authorised two COVID-19 vaccines, namely the Comirnaty vaccine and the Sinovac vaccine, in accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Use of Vaccines) Regulation (Cap. 599K) on January 25 and February 18, 2021 respectively. To comply with the conditions of authorisation, the authorisation applicants are required to submit the latest clinical data on the vaccines, safety update reports and quality certification documents, etc. for continuous review and monitoring.

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

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (January 12), 12 patients who had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus (case numbers: 12519, 12524, 12532, 12536, 12540, 12582, 12584, 12585, 12598, 12674, 12737 and 12828) were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 12 316 patients have been discharged.

A total of 415 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 a public hospital. 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.

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## **CHP investigates 12 confirmed and ten asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases and identifies 31 additional Omicron cases from previously announced cases**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 12) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 12, the CHP was investigating 12 additional confirmed cases and ten additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 22 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch in those 24 hours). This brings the total number of confirmed cases to 12 821 so far and starting from January 1 recorded with 181 asymptomatic cases. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 13 002 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of 17 imported cases, four cases epidemiologically linked with imported case, and one possibly import-related case. Nineteen of the cases involved mutant strains, mutation test results of two cases are pending, while the viral load of the remaining case is insufficient for mutation tests. The patients comprise 13 males and nine females, aged 11 to 62. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)).

The four cases epidemiologically linked with imported cases are 12986 (47-year-old male who is a household contact of case 12854), 12987 (11-year-old boy who is a family member of cases 12945 and 12966), 12988 (45-year-old female who is a family member of cases 12945 and 12966) and 12989 (30-year-old male who is a household contact of case 12903). The possibly import-related case is 13004 (51-year-old female living in Block 3, Po Tin Estate, Tuen Mun who works as a security guard at the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre).

A total of 375 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (December 29, 2021, to January 11, 2022). Forty-nine of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases/possibly import-related cases, one is a local case, while the rest are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the whole genome sequencing analysis of cases announced

earlier conducted by the PHLSB confirmed that cases 12775, 12776, 12784, 12790, 12808, 12809, 12812 to 12816, 12818, 12823, 12824, 12826, 12827, 12829 to 12837, 12908 to 12910, 12941, 12945 and 12966 all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. Together with the aforementioned cases, there are so far 310 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

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](http://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)."