

Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in North Point

The Government today (January 1) 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 7pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in North Point (i.e. Nam Tin Building, 275 King's Road, North Point (excluding the restaurant located on L1 floor and L2 floor of Nam Tin Building). 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 2).

A Government spokesman said, "Under Cap. 599J, the Government can, according to the needs of infection control, make a 'restriction-testing declaration'. As a preliminary tested positive case who has lived in the abovementioned building was detected today, and the preliminary test result involved a 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 after the test result was found to be positive."

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

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.

Persons in the "restricted area" who have undergone testing from December 30, 2021 to January 1, 2022, and are able to provide the SMS notification through a mobile phone or related certification containing the test results, are not required to take the test again. However, they are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained. Also, 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 December 12, 2021 to January 1, 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 January 3, 2022. As a mutant strain is involved, for prudence's sake, vaccinated persons are also required to undergo testing.

In addition, in accordance with the latest arrangement, persons who resided in the same building as the preliminary tested positive case carrying variant of concern suspected to be Omicron are required to undergo compulsory testing on days 2, 3, 4, 7, 12 and 19 counting from the day subsequent to that when the relevant confirmed case last stayed in that building before being admitted to hospital for treatment or leaving Hong Kong.

The Home Affairs Department has set up a hotline (Tel: 2835 1473) which starts operation at 7pm 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.

Government makes "restriction-testing declaration" and issues compulsory testing notice in respect of specified "restricted area" in Tung Chung

The Government today (January 1) 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 6.30pm, under which people (hereafter referred to as "persons subject to compulsory testing") within the specified "restricted area" in Tung Chung (i.e. Tower 6, Albany Cove, Caribbean Coast Phase II, 11 Kin Tung Road, Tung Chung. (excluding the Greenfield English (International) Kindergarten (Tung Chung) located on the ground floor of Tower 6, Albany Cove, Caribbean Coast Phase II and Tower 7, Albany Cove, Caribbean Coast). 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 6am tomorrow (January 2).

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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 1), three patients tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus (case numbers: 12406, 12422 and 12457) were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 12 209 patients have been discharged.

A total of 192 patients tested positive are currently hospitalised in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre and the Hospital Authority (HA) Infectious Disease Centre. Among those patients, one is in serious condition (case number: 12548) while the remainder 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 17 additional cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus and eight additional Omicron cases and provides information on case category

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, January 1, the CHP was investigating 17 additional cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB), taking the number of cases to 12 667 in Hong Kong so far.

The newly reported cases consist of 16 imported cases and one possibly import-related case. Among them, 12 were asymptomatic infection. Fifteen of the cases involved mutant strains; mutation test result of one case is pending; while the viral load of the remaining one case is insufficient for mutation test. The patients comprise four males and 13 females, aged 20 to 54. Among the imported cases, three of them arrived in Hong Kong from Group A specified places (high-risk) with enhanced surveillance and 13 from Group A

specified places (high-risk), ten patients tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and six tested positive during quarantine. The possibly import-related case (case 12656) is an airport ground crew staff member working at HKIA whose specimen collected on December 30 in a mobile specimen collection station tested positive. The CHP has announced the case details yesterday (December 31) (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202112/31/P2021123100709.htm).

As the CHP has recorded increasing number of asymptomatic and re-positive cases, with effect from today, the CHP will further differentiate the cases which were tested positive into three categories: confirmed, asymptomatic and re-positive in the daily press release and at the CHP website.

A total of 136 cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (December 18 to 31). Three of them are import-related cases, while the rest are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the whole genome sequencing analysis of cases announced earlier conducted by the PHLSB confirmed that cases 12606, 12608, 12613, 12614, 12615, 12637, 12649 and 12654 all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. These cases involve eight males aged 16 to 76 years old. Four of them tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the TSCC; three tested positive during quarantine; and one tested positive during medical consultation at a public hospital.

Together with the aforementioned cases, there are so far 95 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

Separately, among the 44 environmental samples taken by the CHP earlier during a field inspection to the restaurant (Moon Palace at Festival Walk) where cases 12611, 12637 and 12654 had patronised at about the same period, none of them tested positive. Moreover, the whole genome sequencing analysis conducted by the PHLSB confirmed that cases 12609, 12611, 12637 and 12654 have identical genetic sequences.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for local cases with mutant strains, the CHP reminded that 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).

Specified persons in relation to the following specified premises are also reminded to undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the CTN tomorrow (January 2):

- Wing Chak House, Chak On Estate, Chak On Road, Shek Kip Mei

- Block A, Hoi Tao Building, Belcher's Street, Kennedy Town
- Block 2, Grandeur Terrace, Tin Shui Road, Tin Shui Wai

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the reported cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

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)."

Protect oneself by receiving third dose of COVID-19 vaccine as early as possible (with photos)

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme is further expanded starting today (January 1). For persons who have received their second dose of the BioNTech vaccine or the Sinovac vaccine six months ago, now is the time to get their third dose.

Meanwhile, persons aged from 12 to 17 who have received their first dose of the BioNTech vaccine for at least 12 weeks can now receive the second dose of the BioNTech vaccine.

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, visited the Lai Chi Kok Park Sports Centre today to see for himself the first day operation of the Community Vaccination Centre (CVC) there after the extension of its opening hours, and to appeal to the public to get vaccinated as early as possible.

To enable members of the public to receive vaccination, nine out of the 10 CVCs will operate daily with extended opening hours from 8am to 8pm. In addition, the number of vaccination stations at public hospitals has increased to 13, and the number of mobile vaccination stations will increase to two starting from January 7.

Members of the public can also get vaccinated at private clinics providing the Sinovac vaccination service, private healthcare institutions

that have enrolled in the BioNTech Vaccination Pilot Scheme and the two designated clinics under the Hospital Authority providing the Sinovac vaccination service.

Mr Nip said, "New Year's Day does not only mark the beginning of the year, it also has another special meaning to us, as today marks a further expansion of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Currently, around 1.48 million persons have received two doses for six months, and 25 per cent of them have received the third dose as well. Eligible persons should take prompt action and get vaccinated to kick-start the year. We need active participation from every member of the public to make concerted efforts to boost the vaccination rate so as to build a protective barrier in the community.

"We should never try our luck under the epidemic. In fact, we are in a race against time with the highly transmissible mutant virus strains. We have to speed up the vaccination pace, in particular for elderly persons. Over 4.87 million persons did their part by getting vaccinated to build a protective barrier in Hong Kong. Under the spreading threat posed by mutant virus strains, the barrier may not be as strong as we think and may not be strong enough to protect our medical system from collapsing. For persons who have taken their first and second doses, please check the vaccination date of the second dose in their vaccination records and be sure to receive their third dose on time. Vaccination is for self-protection and to reduce the risk of falling seriously ill and death should one get infected."

Starting from today, nine CVCs operate daily from 8am to 8pm. The HKU CVC at Gleneagles Hospital Hong Kong operates from 10am to 6pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 8am to 8pm on Saturdays and Sundays; and is closed on Wednesdays. All CVCs close between 1.30pm and 2.30pm on working days for cleaning.

There are various channels for COVID-19 vaccination available for the public:

CVCs providing the Sinovac CoronaVac vaccine

Java Road Sports Centre in North Point
Kwun Chung Sports Centre in Jordan
Yuen Wo Road Sports Centre in Sha Tin

CVCs providing the Fosun/BioNTech Comirnaty vaccine

Sai Wan Ho Sports Centre
Hiu Kwong Street Sports Centre in Kwun Tong
Lai Chi Kok Park Sports Centre
Yuen Long Sports Centre
HKU CVC at Gleneagles Hospital Hong Kong in Wong Chuk Hang
CUHK Medical Centre in Sha Tin
Osman Ramju Sadick Memorial Sports Centre in Kwai Chung

All eligible persons can collect same-day tickets and get vaccinated at the CVCs (except those located at private hospitals) without prior booking.

Thirteen Hospital COVID-19 Vaccination Stations are located in Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital, Yan Chai Hospital, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, Tseung Kwan O Hospital, Caritas Medical Centre, Prince of Wales Hospital, Queen Mary Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Tuen Mun Hospital, Pok Oi Hospital, North District Hospital, Princess Margaret Hospital and Ruttonjee Hospital, providing the BioNTech vaccination service. Prior booking is not required. For details, please visit: www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/HA_HCVS_Location_ENG.pdf.

For the designated clinics under the Hospital Authority providing the Sinovac vaccination service by appointment, please visit: www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_HAGOPC_Venues.pdf.

For the list of doctors or clinics providing the Sinovac vaccination service, please refer to: www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/VSS.

The private healthcare institutions enrolled in the BioNTech Vaccination Pilot Scheme provide the BioNTech vaccination service to the public at 24 venues. Members of the public can contact these institutions and clinics directly for a vaccination appointment, and booking through the designated website of the Vaccination Programme is not required. For enquiry hotlines and vaccination venues, please visit: www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/PrivatePilotScheme_BNT_en.pdf.

The service schedule of the mobile vaccination stations has been uploaded to the website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/List_Mobile_Vaccination_Station_ENG.pdf) and will be updated from time to time.

The designated website for the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/programme) provides the latest information including vaccination venues, reservation and enquiry hotlines.



