

CHP investigates 14 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 12 additional Omicron cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, December 29, the CHP was investigating 14 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 619 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 618 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases. Eleven of the cases involved mutant strains, the mutation test result of one case is pending, and the viral loads of the remaining two cases are insufficient for mutation tests. The patients comprise nine males and five females, aged 15 to 63. Eight of them arrived in Hong Kong from Group A specified places (high-risk) with enhanced surveillance and six 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 and three tested positive during quarantine. The remaining patient (case 12611) is a local air crew member. He underwent medical surveillance and regular compulsory testing in accordance with the relevant requirements for exempted persons and his sample collected at a community testing centre tested positive for COVID-19. The CHP has announced the case details yesterday (December 28) (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202112/28/P2021122800615.htm).

Among the above-mentioned cases, case 12617 involves a 15-year-old female patient living at Tower 6, The Belcher's, Pok Fu Lam. She departed Hong Kong on December 15 for the United States (US). She arrived in Hong Kong on December 26 from the US by flight CX893 and tested negative upon arrival in the TSCC. According to the quarantine requirement for inbound travellers from a Group A specified place (high-risk) with enhanced surveillance, she underwent quarantine at the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre for the first four days, during which her sample on December 27 tested positive. She developed symptoms on December 28 and had a Ct value of less than 30. As a prudent measure, the places where she resided and visited in Hong Kong during the incubation period have been included in a compulsory testing notice (CTN). Specified persons who were present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on the specified date.

A total of 109 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (December 15 to 28). One of them is an import-related case, while the rest are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the whole genome sequencing analysis of cases announced earlier conducted by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch confirmed that cases 12578, 12579, 12581, 12582, 12583, 12584, 12585, 12586, 12588, 12591, 12593 and 12594 all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron.

These cases involved four males and eight females, aged 19 to 79 years old. Ten of them tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the TSCC while two tested positive during quarantine.

Together with the aforementioned cases, there are so far 70 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

Also, as the passenger flights (CX881) operated by Cathay Pacific arriving in Hong Kong from Los Angeles, the US, on December 26 and 28 each had two passengers who tested positive upon arrival (a total of four passengers confirmed to have COVID-19 by arrival tests within a seven-day period), and another passenger flight (CX829) arriving in Hong Kong from Toronto, Canada, on December 28 had three 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 Los Angeles or Toronto operated by Cathay Pacific in Hong Kong from December 29 to January 11, 2022.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for local COVID-19 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 (December 30):

- On Hei House, Siu Hei Court, 201 Wu Chui Road, Tuen Mun
- One South Lane, 1 South Lane, Shek Tong Tsui
- Twilight Court, Peninsula Village, 2 Caperidge Drive, Discovery Bay, Lantau Island
- Tower 1, The SeaCrest, Hang Kwai Street, Tuen Mun

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed 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)."

[Hong Kong Flower Show 2022 commercial stalls auctioned](#)

The auction of Hong Kong Flower Show 2022 commercial stalls was conducted smoothly today (December 29) at Lockhart Road Sports Centre in Wan Chai. All 33 stalls were successfully let at the auction, bringing in total revenue of \$1,156,030.

Organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the 10-day flower show will be held from March 11 to 20, 2022, at Victoria Park.

In view of the anti-epidemic measures against COVID-19, there will be no food and drink-related stalls in the coming flower show. The 33 commercial stalls in the showground include 29 flower and gardening stalls, two handicraft stalls, one book stall and one photographic equipment stall.

The results of today's auction are as follows:

Flower and gardening stall (5 metres x 5m): 29

Upset price: \$11,370

Bid prices: Ranging from \$11,370 to \$90,200

Average price: \$38,219

Handicraft stall (5m x 5m): 2

Upset price: \$11,370

Bid prices: All are \$11,370

Average price: \$11,370

Book stall (5m x 10m): 1

Upset price: \$7,750

Bid price: \$7,750

Photographic equipment stall (5m x 5m): 1

Upset price: \$11,370

Bid price: \$17,200

[Term of non-permanent CFA judge extended](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Chief Executive has accepted the recommendation of the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal to extend the term of office of the Right Honourable the Lord Hoffmann, GBS, as a non-permanent judge from another common law jurisdiction of the Court of Final Appeal for a period of three years commencing January 12, 2022.

The Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal Ordinance provides for a list of non-permanent Hong Kong judges and a list of judges from other common law jurisdictions. The term of appointment of such judges is three years. That term may be extended for one or more periods of three years by the Chief Executive acting in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Justice.

[Update on monitoring COVID-19 vaccination](#)

In the preceding week till 11.59pm on December 26, the Department of Health (DH) received 43 reports (Note) of adverse events following COVID-19 immunisation. No death case was reported by the Hospital Authority (HA) involving individuals who had received vaccines within 14 days before they passed away and had potential association with vaccination.

As at 8pm on December 26, around 9.84 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines had been administered for members of the public. Around 4.86 million people had received at least one dose of vaccine, accounting for 72.1 per cent of the population aged 12 or above. The DH received 6 595 reports (Note) of adverse events (0.07 per cent of the total vaccine doses administered). Among the death cases concerning persons who had been vaccinated, including 52 cases with vaccination within 14 days before they passed away (0.0005 per cent of the total vaccine doses administered), none of the death cases was associated with vaccination.

As at December 26, the Expert Committee on Clinical Events Assessment Following COVID-19 Immunisation had concluded that 35 death cases had no causal relationship with vaccination, and preliminarily considered that 14 cases were not associated with vaccination. Three cases are still pending further information for assessment. The Expert Committee considered that there is no unusual pattern identified so far, and will continue to closely monitor the relevant situation and collect data for assessment.

According to information from the HA, during the period from November 29 to December 26, the ratio of death cases out of those without a vaccination record was 138.3 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of death cases for those with a vaccination record was 9.0 cases for every 100 000 people. The overall death rate is similar to that recorded in the past three

years. Out of those without a vaccination record, the ratio of death cases with acute stroke or acute myocardial infarction was 6.8 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of death cases under the same category for those with a vaccination record was 0.7 cases for every 100 000 people. Furthermore, the ratio of miscarriage cases out of those without a vaccination record was 27.5 cases for every 100 000 people, whereas the ratio of miscarriage cases for those who had a vaccination record was 12.0 cases for every 100 000 people. Based on the statistical analysis of the above figures, there is no evidence that vaccination increases the risk of death or miscarriage for recipients. The relevant reference statistics will be uploaded to the thematic website for the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.

The majority of non-death cases of adverse events received so far are relatively minor cases. The relevant details can be found in the "Report on the Safety Monitoring of COVID-19 Vaccines in Hong Kong" (www.drugoffice.gov.hk/eps/do/en/doc/Safety_Monitoring_of_COVID-19_Vaccines_in_Hong_Kong.pdf).

"The COVID-19 vaccination rate for the elderly aged 80 or above in Hong Kong is only around 20 per cent at present, meaning that 80 per cent of the elderly in that age group are in a dangerous situation, which is alarming. The Comirnaty and CoronaVac vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from COVID-19. They can provide effective protection to those vaccinated in preventing serious complications and even death after infection. Starting from January 1, 2022, the Government will expand the third dose vaccination programme to include all people who have received two doses of vaccines for a period of time. We call on members of the public who are currently eligible for a third dose to get the dose as soon as possible. As for those not yet vaccinated, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a much higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, they should get vaccinated as early as possible for better self-protection before the fifth wave strikes Hong Kong," a Government spokesman said.

Note: Provisional figures. In the preceding week till 11.59pm on December 26, the DH did not receive any reports of suspected myocarditis or pericarditis involving adolescents aged 12 to 15.

[SFH inspects Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre to ensure preparation in tackling COVID-19 epidemic \(with](#)

photos)

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, inspected Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre today (December 29) to learn more about the preparation made by the Centre in tackling the COVID-19 epidemic, so as to ensure a contingency plan is in place for possible change in the epidemic situation.

She received a briefing from colleagues of the Civil Aid Service (CAS) and the Department of Health (DH) on the current operation of the Centre, including the number of units, the latest occupancy rate, the arrangement of suitable units to cater for different needs of people staying there, and the enhancement in cleaning efficiency in order to increase the turnover rate of the units.

Professor Chan said, "The global pandemic situation is rapidly worsening due to the Omicron variant and the number of imported cases in Hong Kong is on the rise. According to figures from the Centre for Health Protection of the DH, over 90 per cent of the confirmed cases recorded on December 26 and 27 were related to the Omicron variant.

"In view of the growing threat posed by the Omicron variant, the Government will continue to employ the most stringent measures in guarding against importation of cases in order to manage and defend against the importation risks posed by Omicron 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. Meanwhile, the Government will also closely monitor whether there is prevalent transmission of Omicron cases in overseas places and impose more stringent and enhanced surveillance measures on Group A places with enhanced surveillance from which imported Omicron cases were detected. Relevant measures include requiring persons arriving at Hong Kong from these Group A places with enhanced surveillance to undergo compulsory quarantine at a quarantine centre for the first four days of arrival at Hong Kong and to undergo daily testing in the first seven days of their arrival.

"I noticed that Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre, as a key quarantine facility in Hong Kong and a crucial line of defence against the importation of cases, has geared up in preparation and implemented response measures. The workload there is much heavier these days given the rising number of people arriving at Hong Kong and close contacts of confirmed cases staying in the Centre recently. I wish to extend my appreciation to the staff serving there, including those from the DH, the CAS, the Auxiliary Medical Service, the Hong Kong Police Force and the Fire Services Department, for their dedication and devotion to their work in the fight against the pandemic."

Professor Chan convened a meeting last Thursday (December 23) to discuss with officials from the Food and Health Bureau, the DH and the Hospital Authority on the contingency plans regarding the possible emergence of

a fifth wave. The plans cover various response measures, including the immediate strengthening of testing, quarantine, isolation, treatment and social distancing measures, to be activated swiftly when needed.

"At present, we are constantly reviewing and adjusting the anti-epidemic control measures and strategies, with a view to guarding against the importation of cases and the resurgence of local infection as well as attaining the goal of dynamic 'zero infection'," she emphasised.

