

CHP follows up on preliminary positive case of COVID-19 involving Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra musician

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (October 14) continued its investigations into a preliminary positive case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), which involves a Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) musician. As a precautionary measure, audience members who attended the HK Phil's concerts on October 9 and 10 are advised to pay attention to their health conditions and undergo virus testing.

The case involves a 35-year-old man who is a wind instrument musician of the HK Phil. He developed a fever on October 11 and sought medical treatment at North Lantau Hospital and Union Hospital respectively on October 12. His respiratory specimen tested preliminarily positive for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

The patient had taken part in the HK Phil's performances at the Concert Hall, Hong Kong Cultural Centre (HKCC), during the evenings of October 9 and 10. As the patient could not wear a mask during the performances, the 90-odd musicians who performed on stage with him were identified as close contacts and are being arranged for quarantine. Initial investigations by the CHP revealed that there were about 50 backstage crew who took part in the same performances. They did not have contact with the patient and had worn masks. The CHP will arrange virus testing for them.

According to the CHP's assessment, as the HKCC had put in place social distancing measures and all audience members were required to put on masks, the audience members of the two concerts are not considered to be close contacts. Nevertheless, for the sake of prudence, the CHP advised audience members who had attended the two concerts to pay attention to their health conditions and seek medical attention immediately if feeling unwell. Those who remain asymptomatic are advised to make use of the existing free COVID-19 testing services, including undergoing testing at the four temporary testing centres set up by the Government in Wan Chai, Kwai Tsing, Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong Districts, or to obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack at the general out-patient clinics of the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has advised the Leisure and Cultural Services Department to arrange a thorough cleaning and sterilisation at the venue, and that the Concert Hall be temporarily closed for 14 days. The CHP will distribute specimen collection bottles to the staff of the HKCC and other staff members of the HK Phil.

The patient lives in Tower 2, Phase 1, Coastal Skyline, Tung Chung. His family members who live with him remain asymptomatic and were sent to a quarantine centre. Specimen collection bottles will be distributed at his

residence.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations are ongoing.

As the Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 was still in force past 7pm yesterday (October 13), the specimen collection service of the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) under the CHP was suspended and the PHLSB could only maintain limited service, hence no additional confirmed cases of COVID-19 were recorded from the specimens handled yesterday. As of 0.00am, October 14, the number of cases of COVID-19 in Hong Kong maintains at 5,202 in Hong Kong (comprising 5,201 confirmed cases and one probable case).

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 list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

A spokesman for the CHP said, "During the CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases, we will compile and upload (www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/building_list_eng.pdf) a list of buildings that confirmed patients had visited from two days before the onset of symptoms. Given that cases of local infection continue to occur from time to time, members of the public are urged to seek medical attention immediately if they believe that they had visited the same place at an identical time with a confirmed patient and feel unwell subsequently. If they remain asymptomatic but are concerned that they have been infected, they can also visit the Hospital Authority's designated general out-patient clinics (www.ha.org.hk/haho/ho/covid-19/GOPC_extend_EN.pdf) to obtain specimen collection packs and collect deep throat saliva specimens for free COVID-19 testing."

In view of the severe epidemic situation, the CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks such as shopping for basic necessities.

The spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially

before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.