

CHP investigates 1 860 confirmed and 1 752 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 5 016 cases pending status by nucleic acid tests as well as 13 022 cases tested positive by rapid antigen tests (with photo)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (March 17) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, March 17, the CHP was investigating 8 628 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus by nucleic acid tests (1 860 confirmed cases, 1 752 asymptomatic cases and 5 016 cases with pending case status) in the past 24 hours. Separately, 13 022 additional positive cases through rapid antigen tests (RAT) (8 630 symptomatic cases and 4 392 asymptomatic cases) were reported. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 670 713 and 326 149 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests and RAT respectively for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The aforementioned newly reported cases consist of nine imported cases and 8 619 locally acquired cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests, as well as 13 022 locally acquired cases tested positive by RAT. The CHP is continuing with epidemiological investigations on the cases. A list of buildings related to the cases is available at the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

In addition, as of 0.00am, March 17, a total of 4 923 deaths related to COVID-19 during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) was recorded, with 4 908 and 15 deaths reported from the Hospital Authority and public mortuaries respectively. Hong Kong has so far recorded a total of 5 136 deaths related to COVID-19.

Furthermore, among the earlier cases by nucleic acid tests reported, there were cases (including pending cases) changed to confirmed, asymptomatic or re-positive cases. As at yesterday (March 16), the total number of confirmed cases was 270 375, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases, pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 133 527, 10 and 258 173 respectively.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed that the local situation of COVID-19 infection became severe recently and there is a continuous increase in the number of cases involving mutant strains that carry higher transmissibility. With the higher transmissibility and risk of infection of the Omicron mutant strain, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to continue to comply with the social distancing measures, avoid going out and 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 reminded that COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. They can provide effective protection to those vaccinated in preventing serious complications and even death after infection. People who are yet to receive vaccination, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, should get vaccinated as early as possible for self-protection and to reduce the risk of falling seriously ill and death should they get infected. Meanwhile, a person who gets COVID-19 and influenza at the same time may be more seriously ill and would have a higher risk of death. Influenza vaccination may reduce the likelihood of hospitalisation and the length of stay. In addition, seasonal influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications. Persons at higher risk of getting influenza and its complications, including the elderly and children, should receive seasonal influenza vaccination early. Please see details of the vaccination schemes on the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/17980.html).

