

CHP investigates 10 102 confirmed and 4 836 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 13 537 cases pending status by nucleic acid tests and 2 018 cases tested positive by rapid antigen tests

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (March 8) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, March 8, the CHP was investigating 28 475 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus by nucleic acid tests (10 102 confirmed cases, 4 836 additional asymptomatic cases and 13 537 cases with pending case status) in the past 24 hours. Separately, 2 018 additional positive cases through rapid antigen tests (RAT) (1 626 symptomatic cases and 392 asymptomatic cases) were reported. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 525 242 and 2 018 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 28 466 locally acquired cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests, as well as 2 018 locally acquired cases tested positive by RAT. The CHP is continuing with epidemiological investigations on the cases.

In addition, as of 0.00am, March 8, a total of 2 365 deaths related to COVID-19 during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) was recorded, with 2 357 and eight deaths reported from the Hospital Authority and public mortuaries respectively. Hong Kong has so far recorded a total of 2 578 deaths related to COVID-19.

As at 4pm today, a total of 434 223 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests for the SARS-CoV-2 virus had been reported in the past 14 days (February 22 to March 7), including 434 100 locally acquired cases and 123 imported cases. During the same period, a total of 2 018 cases tested positive by RAT had been reported. A list of buildings related to the cases is available at the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

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 7), the total number of confirmed cases was 216 776, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases, pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 100 595, 10 and 179 386 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).