

CHP investigates 10 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, December 16, the CHP was investigating 10 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 507 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 506 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases which involved mutant strains. The patients comprise six males and four females, aged 24 to 76. Nine of them arrived in Hong Kong from Group A specified places (high-risk) and one from a Group B specified place (medium-risk). Eight patients tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at Hong Kong International Airport and one tested positive during quarantine at a designated quarantine hotel. The remaining case (12504) is a sea crew member who arrived in Hong Kong from Japan via the cargo vessel Glory Sky on December 1. There were confirmed cases involving sea crew members of that vessel earlier (case 12453 and cases 12459 to 12464). The remaining sea crew members of the cargo vessel have to stay on board the vessel to undergo their quarantine. Case 12504 tested positive during quarantine on board.

A total of 57 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (December 2 to 15) and all of them are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the CHP is investigating a case of COVID-19 confirmed in Taiwan involving a 51-year-old female patient who lives at Silver Waves Court, 9 Ngan Kwong Wan Road, Mui Wo. She tested negative in Hong Kong on November 30. She travelled to Taiwan on December 2 by flight CX494 and her specimen collected in Taiwan on the same day tested negative. She tested positive on December 12 with a Ct value of about 20. According to information provided by the patient, she developed symptoms on December 11. She received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) on August 11 and September 1 in Hong Kong. The CHP is following up on the case with the Taiwan health authority. As a prudent measure, the places where the patient visited in Hong Kong during the incubation period have been included in a compulsory testing notice. Specified persons who were present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on or before the specified dates.

Also, as a passenger flight (RA409) operated by Nepal Airlines arriving in Hong Kong from Kathmandu, Nepal, on December 14 had four passengers confirmed to have COVID-19 by arrival testing, 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 Kathmandu operated by Nepal Airlines in Hong Kong from December 16 to 29.

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).

â€‹â€‹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)."