

CHP investigates 113 confirmed and 24 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 488 pending cases status and updates arrangement for patients after discharge

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (February 8) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, February 8, the CHP was investigating 113 additional confirmed cases, 24 additional asymptomatic cases and 488 cases with pending case status in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 625 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) in those 24 hours). Hong Kong has recorded a total of 16 647 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of four imported cases and 621 locally acquired cases. The CHP is actively investigating their sources of infection to see whether they are epidemiologically linked with previous cases.

As at 4pm today, a total of 2 628 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (January 25 to February 7), including 2 409 locally acquired cases and 219 imported cases. A list of buildings related to the cases is available at the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

In view of the latest development of epidemic situation, after risk assessment by the Government, with effect from tomorrow (February 9), patients tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus who fulfilled discharge criteria will not be required to undergo compulsory isolation upon discharge from hospital. Instead, they will be required to perform self-monitoring for 14 days upon discharge, i.e. continue to monitor their health condition, including taking body temperature twice daily. They have to maintain appropriate infection control measures including wearing masks properly, maintaining hand hygiene and avoiding social gatherings as far as feasible.

Separately, to stop the potential risk of further spread of the virus, the CHP has arranged/will arrange the residents concerned of the following building(s), where cases suspectedly related to environmental factors (including vertical/horizontal transmission, adjacent yard area and shared pipes) were detected, to undergo quarantine at quarantine centre:

- Fu Yuet House, Fu Cheong Estate, Sham Shui Po: residents of all units on 2nd floor.

Also, as the passenger flight (QR818) operated by Qatar Airways arriving

in Hong Kong from Doha, Qatar, on February 6, 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 in Hong Kong from Doha operated by Qatar Airways from February 8 to 21.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for cases with mutant strains, 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).

The CHP strongly reminded members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo the multiple tests on time as required. The compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. The Government will seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. The Government reiterates that the aim of issuing a compulsory testing notice is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community as soon as possible to protect overall public health and safety.

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 to 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.