

CHP investigates 12 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 11 additional Omicron cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, December 30, the CHP was investigating 12 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 631 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 630 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases. Seven of the cases involved mutant strains, the mutation test results of three cases are pending, and the viral loads of the remaining two cases are insufficient for mutation tests. The patients comprise nine males and three females, aged 1 to 61. Six of them arrived in Hong Kong from Group A specified places (high-risk) with enhanced surveillance and six from Group A specified places (high-risk). Nine patients tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at Hong Kong International Airport, and three tested positive during quarantine, among which case 12625 is a close contact of imported cases confirmed previously (cases 12594 and 12608) and tested positive at a public hospital.

Among the above-mentioned cases, case 12632 involves a 46-year-old male patient living at Block 1, Grandeur Garden, Chik Fai Street, Tai Wai. He departed Hong Kong on December 17 for the United Kingdom (UK) after he tested negative on December 16. He arrived in Hong Kong on December 27 from the UK by flight AY101 via Finland and his specimen collected upon arrival in the TSCC tested negative. According to the quarantine requirement for inbound travellers from a Group A specified place (high-risk) with enhanced surveillance, he underwent quarantine for four days at the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre. His sample during quarantine on December 28 tested positive. The patient was asymptomatic and with a Ct value higher than 30. He works in Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Sin Chu Wan Primary School and last went to work on December 16. As a prudent measure, the places where he resided, worked and visited in Hong Kong during the incubation period have been included in a compulsory testing notice (CTN). Specified persons who were present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on the specified date.

A total of 122 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (December 16 to 29). One of them is an import-related case, while the rest are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the whole genome sequencing analysis of cases announced earlier conducted by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch confirmed that cases 12589, 12592, 12595, 12596, 12597, 12598, 12599, 12600, 12609, 12610 and 12611 all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. These cases involved eight males and three females, aged 21 to 59 years old. Four

of them tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the TSCC, four tested positive during quarantine and the other three tested negative by arrival testing and later tested positive at community testing centres.

Together with the aforementioned cases, there are so far 81 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

Also, the DH 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 the relevant original port of the following airlines from December 30 to January 12, 2022:

- Passenger flight (AY101) operated by Finnair arriving in Hong Kong from Helsinki, Finland on December 27 had one passenger who tested positive by arrival testing and two passengers who failed to comply with the requirements specified under Cap. 599H;
- Passenger flight (TK083) operated by Turkish Airlines arriving in Hong Kong from Istanbul, Turkey on December 28 had one passenger who tested positive by arrival testing and two passengers who failed to comply with the requirements specified under Cap. 599H; and
- Passenger flight (5J272) operated by Cebu Pacific Air arriving in Hong Kong from Manila, the Philippines on December 29 had three passengers who tested positive by arrival testing.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for local COVID-19 cases with mutant strains, the CHP reminded that 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).

Specified persons in relation to the following specified premises are also reminded to undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the CTN tomorrow (December 31):

- Hong Kong Sports Institute, 25 Yuen Wo Road, Shatin
- Crowne Plaza Hong Kong Kowloon East, 3 Tong Tak Street, Tseung Kwan O
- One South Lane, No. 1 South Lane, Shek Tong Tsui
- Twilight Court, Peninsula Village, 2 Caperidge Drive, Discovery Bay, Lantau Island
- Tower 1, The SeaCrest, 1 Hang Kwai Street, Tuen Mun

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€‹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)."