

CHP investigates 13 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, September 28, the CHP was investigating 13 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 210 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 209 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases. Among them, case 12204 involves a 37-year-old male patient, who lives at Jones Hive, 8 Jones Street, Causeway Bay. He tested negative in Hong Kong on September 10 and travelled to Italy on September 11 by flight QR817. He returned to Hong Kong on September 26 by flight QR818 and his specimen collected upon arrival in the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) on the same day tested positive for COVID-19 and carries the L452R mutant strain but does not carry the N501Y or E484K mutant genes. He had been asymptomatic. He received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) on April 24 and May 15 in Hong Kong. He works at 23/F, Lee Garden Three, 1 Sunning Road, Causeway Bay, and last went to work on September 10.

Case 12208 involves a 39-year-old male patient, who lives at Block C, Hankow Centre, Tsim Sha Tsui. He tested negative in Hong Kong on September 9 and travelled to India on September 10 by flight EK385. He returned to Hong Kong after a short stay in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on September 26 by flight EK384 and his specimen collected upon arrival in the TSCC at HKIA on the same day tested positive for COVID-19 and carries the L452R mutant strain but does not carry the N501Y or E484K mutant genes. He developed sore throat on September 26. He received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) on May 7 and May 28 in Hong Kong. He works at Shop 9, G/F, CFC Tower, 22-28 Mody Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, and last went to work on September 10.

Epidemiological investigation and contact tracing of the cases is continuing. As a prudent measure, the places where they resided, worked and visited in Hong Kong during the incubation periods 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 or before the specified dates.

A total of 50 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (September 14 to 27) and all of them are imported cases.

The CHP is also investigating a non-locally confirmed case. The CHP received notification from the Macao health authority that a case involves a 37-year-old female patient who travelled to Macao by bus via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge on September 19. Her specimen collected on September 26 in Macao tested positive. She has been asymptomatic. The patient received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (CoronaVac) on March 11 and April 8 in Hong Kong. She travelled to the UAE, Egypt, Croatia and Montenegro from April 9 to

July 10 this year. The CHP is following up on the case with the Macao health authority. Epidemiological investigation and contact tracing of the case is continuing. She lives at Block 3, The Zenith, 258 Queen's Road East. As a prudent measure, the places where she resided in Hong Kong during the incubation period will be included in a CTN.

Furthermore, as a passenger flight (QR818) operated by Qatar Airways arriving in Hong Kong from Doha, Qatar, on September 26 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 Doha operated by Qatar Airways in Hong Kong from September 28 to October 11.

In view of the fact that many recent imported cases have joined non-essential travel after vaccination, 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 urged 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)."

The spokesman reminded, "If travel is unavoidable, the CHP highly recommends the public to be fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines before their departure. They should avoid participating in non-essential mass gatherings or events held outside Hong Kong. They should continue to wear a surgical mask and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times. Parents are also urged to avoid taking unvaccinated children travelling."

Separately, according to the testing and quarantine arrangements for local COVID-19 cases with mutant strains, the CHP reminded people that persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on days 3, 7, 12 and 19 following the announcement of the relevant confirmed cases by the DH. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day. Relevant deadlines of compulsory testing for respective specified premises are listed on the Government's website 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 (September 29):

- Hong Kin House, Tsz Hong Estate, Tsz Wan Shan

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 list of buildings with confirmed

cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk). The DH has also been closely monitoring the mutant strains of SARS CoV-2 and has uploaded the relevant information on Variants of Concern (VOCs) and Variants of Interest (VOIs), based on whole genome sequencing results, to the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/statistics/data/10/641/100135/6973.html). The data will be updated regularly.

The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk). Generally speaking, COVID-19 vaccination can prevent COVID-19 infection, and if infected, reduce the risk of severe disease and death from COVID-19.

The CHP called on members of the public to pay attention to their health condition, seek medical advice early and undergo COVID-19 nucleic acid testing as soon as possible if respiratory symptoms develop. They should also maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times, to protect themselves against infection and prevent the spread of the disease in the community.

On a personal level, members of the public should put on a surgical mask when they need to go out. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask. Hand hygiene should be performed frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing. Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds, then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative. Cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly.

â€œTo ensure household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) by pouring about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap). They should also pay attention to hygiene when using the toilet by putting the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs.