

CHP investigates 13 confirmed and 26 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases and 12 additional Omicron cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 4) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 4, the CHP was investigating 13 additional confirmed cases and 26 additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 39 additional cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) in those 24 hours), taking the number of confirmed cases to 12 690 so far and starting from January 1 recorded 71 asymptomatic cases. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 12 761 cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of 36 imported cases and three cases epidemiologically linked with imported case. Thirty-four of the cases involved mutant strains while mutation test results of the remaining five cases are pending. The patients comprise 16 males and 23 females, aged 13 to 66. Among the imported cases, eight of them arrived in Hong Kong from Group A specified places (high-risk) with enhanced surveillance, 27 from Group A specified places (high-risk) and one from a Group B specified place (medium-risk). Thirty-two patients tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at Hong Kong International Airport and four tested positive during quarantine.

Cases 12746, 12747 and 12754 are the three cases epidemiologically linked with imported case. Case 12747 is a case related to Moon Palace. The 66-year-old female patient had a meal at Moon Palace from around 12.30pm to 1.30pm on December 27. She was arranged to undergo quarantine at Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre (PBQC) on December 31 and tested positive subsequently. The CHP has announced the case details yesterday (January 3) (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202201/03/P2022010300688.htm). Cases 12746 and 12754 are family members of the earlier imported case 12676 living together. They have no recent travel history. Case 12746 involves a 35-year-old male patient and the details of the case have been announced yesterday (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202201/03/P2022010300663.htm). Case 12754 involves a 62-year-old female patient. She is asymptomatic and, as a close contact, was arranged to conduct quarantine at PBQC on January 1. Her specimen collected on January 2 tested positive. The patient has not received COVID-19 vaccination.

A total of 188 cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (December 21, 2021, to January 3, 2022). Six of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases/possibly import-related cases, while the rest are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the whole genome sequencing analysis of cases announced earlier conducted by the PHLSB confirmed that cases 12620 to 12629, 12673 and 12708 all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. These cases involve eight males and four females aged 1 to 61 years old. Nine of them tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the TSCC and three tested positive during quarantine.

Together with the aforementioned cases, there are so far 114 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 January 4 to January 17:

- Passenger flight (CX419) operated by Cathay Pacific arriving in Hong Kong from Seoul, Korea on January 2 had three passengers who tested positive upon arrival;
- Passenger flight (AI1314) operated by Air India arriving in Hong Kong from Delhi, India on January 2 had three passengers who tested positive upon arrival;
- Passenger flight (AC007) operated by Air Canada arriving in Hong Kong from Vancouver, Canada on January 2 had four passengers who tested positive upon arrival;
- Passenger flight (TG600) operated by Thai Airways arriving in Hong Kong from Bangkok, Thailand on January 2 had five passengers who tested positive upon arrival; and
- Passenger flight (Z21264) operated by Philippines AirAsia arriving in Hong Kong from Manila, the Philippines on January 2 had eight passengers who tested positive upon arrival.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for 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 (January 5):

- Wharney Hotel, 57-73 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai
- Block 6, Villa Athena, 600 Sai Sha Road, Ma On Shan
- Block K (flat 1-8), Kornhill, Quarry Bay

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the reported 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)."