

CHP investigates 17 confirmed and 16 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases and 83 additional Omicron cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 7) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 7, the CHP was investigating 17 additional confirmed cases and 16 additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 33 additional cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) in those 24 hours). This brings a total number of confirmed cases to 12 749 so far and starting from January 1 recorded 116 asymptomatic cases. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 12 865 cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

With higher transmissibility and risk of infection of the Omicron mutant strain, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to comply with the recently tightened social distancing measures in the next two weeks, and to refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or gathering (particularly religious or cross-family activities and gatherings). This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

The newly reported cases consist of 26 imported cases and seven cases epidemiologically linked with imported case. 28 of the cases involved mutant strains, mutation test results of three cases are pending, while the viral load of the remaining two cases is insufficient for mutation tests. The patients comprise nine males and 24 females, aged four months to 73.

The seven cases epidemiologically linked with imported case are 12838 (37-year-old female), 12839 (63-year-old male), 12840 (67-year-old female), 12841 (62-year-old female), 12854 (51-year-old female), 12860 (73-year-old female) and 12864 (49-year-old female). The CHP has announced the details of cases 12838 and 12841 on January 5 (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202201/05/P2022010500820.htm) and details of cases 12839, 12840, 12854, 12860 and 12864 yesterday (January 6) (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202201/06/P2022010600822.htm).

A total of 281 cases tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (December 24, 2021, to January 6, 2022). Eighteen 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 12616, 12653, 12657 to 12666, 12669, 12671, 12672, 12678 to 12690, 12692 to 12707, 12709, 12711 to

12718, 12720, 12722 to 12725, 12727 to 12731, 12733 to 12744, 12746, 12747, 12754, 12755, 12767, 12785, 12805 and 12806 all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. Together with the aforementioned cases, there are so far 223 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

Also, as the passenger flight (QR818) operated by Qatar Airways arriving in Hong Kong from Doha, Qatar, on January 5, 2022 had eight 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 January 7 to 20, 2022.

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).

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)."