

CHP investigates 17 confirmed and four asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 11) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 11, the CHP was investigating 17 additional confirmed cases and four additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 21 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch in those 24 hours). This brings the total number of confirmed cases to 12 809 so far and starting from January 1 recorded with 171 asymptomatic cases. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 12 980 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of 13 imported cases and eight cases epidemiologically linked with imported cases. Twenty of the cases involved mutant strains while the mutation test result of the remaining case is pending. The patients comprise nine males and 12 females, aged 16 to 63. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

The eight cases epidemiologically linked with imported cases are 12966 (47-year-old male who is a family member living together with case 12945), 12967 (38-year-old male who is a family member of case 12821), 12977 (36-year-old female who is a family member of case 12821 and was a household contact of case 12967), 12969 (32-year-old female who is a household contact of case 12903), 12970 (31-year-old male who is a family member of cases 12825 and 12841), 12979 (52-year-old male who is co-worker of case 12825), 12985 (48-year-old male who is a co-worker of case 12825) and 12982 (16-year-old female who is a family member living together with case 12913).

For case 12985, the 48-year-old male patient lives in Maple Gardens Phase III, 51 Kin Wah Street, North Point. He worked at CITIC Securities Company Limited in North Point and last went to work on January 5. He is the colleague of cases 12825, 12880 and 12979. He was classified as a close contact of case 12825 and was arranged to undergo quarantine at the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre on January 8. He is asymptomatic and tested positive yesterday (January 10). The Government has made a "restriction-testing declaration" (RTD) tonight for the building where the patient resided and persons who resided or worked at the building will be subject to increased compulsory testing frequency.

A total of 360 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (December 28, 2021, to January 10, 2022). Forty-one of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases/possibly import-related cases, one is a local case, while the rest are imported cases.

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. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months. Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). 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.

With the 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 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.

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)."