

CHP investigates 2 101 confirmed and 321 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 6 376 cases pending status

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (February 24) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, February 24, the CHP was investigating 2 101 additional confirmed cases, 321 additional asymptomatic cases and 6 376 cases with pending case status in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 8 798 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus in those 24 hours). Hong Kong has recorded a total of 84 046 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of three imported cases and 8 795 locally acquired cases. The CHP is continuing with epidemiological investigations on the cases.

As at 4pm today, a total of 57 440 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus had been reported in the past 14 days (February 10 to 23), including 57 353 locally acquired cases and 87 imported cases. In addition, among the earlier cases reported, there were cases (including pending cases) changed to confirmed, asymptomatic or re-positive cases. As at yesterday (February 23), the total number of confirmed cases was 32 951, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases, pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 5 071, 10 and 37 216 respectively.

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 according to risk assessment (see the details of the buildings and dates of testing at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf). A list of buildings related to the cases is available at the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

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. 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.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed that the local situation of COVID-19 infection became severe recently and there is a continuous

increase in the number of cases involving mutant strains that carry higher transmissibility. With the higher transmissibility and risk of infection of the Omicron mutant strain, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to continue to comply with the social distancing measures, avoid going out and 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.

The spokesman reminded that COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. They can provide effective protection to those vaccinated in preventing serious complications and even death after infection. People who are yet to receive vaccination, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, should get vaccinated as early as possible for self-protection and to reduce the risk of falling seriously ill and death should they get infected. Meanwhile, a person who gets COVID-19 and influenza at the same time may be more seriously ill and would have a higher risk of death. Influenza vaccination may reduce the likelihood of hospitalisation and the length of stay. In addition, seasonal influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications. Persons at higher risk of getting influenza and its complications, including the elderly and children, should receive seasonal influenza vaccination early. Please see details of the vaccination schemes on the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/17980.html).