

CHP investigates 340 confirmed and 319 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 5 408 pending cases status

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (February 20) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, February 20, the CHP was investigating 340 additional confirmed cases, 319 additional asymptomatic cases and 5 408 cases with pending case status in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 6 067 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus in those 24 hours). Hong Kong has recorded a total of 52 830 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of 12 imported cases and 6 055 locally acquired cases. The CHP is continuing with epidemiological investigation on the cases.

As at 4pm today, a total of 31 697 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (February 6 to 19), including 31 610 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 19), the total number of confirmed cases were 22 128, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases, pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 2 476, 10 and 22 149 respectively.

Also, as a passenger flight (TG600) operated by Thai Airways arriving in Hong Kong from Bangkok, Thailand, on February 18 had one passenger who tested positive upon arrival, and one passenger who failed to comply with the requirements specified under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H), the DH thus invoked Cap. 599H to prohibit the landing of passenger flights from Bangkok operated by Thai Airways in Hong Kong from February 20 to March 5.

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.