

CHP investigates 578 confirmed and 68 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 3 639 pending cases status

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (February 16) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, February 16, the CHP was investigating 578 additional confirmed cases, 68 additional asymptomatic cases and 3 639 cases with pending case status in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 4 285 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus in those 24 hours). Hong Kong has recorded a total of 30 955 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of 21 imported cases and 4 264 locally acquired cases. The CHP is continuing with epidemiological investigation on the cases.

As at 4pm today, a total of 12 344 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (February 2 to 15), including 12 250 locally acquired cases and 94 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 15), the total number of confirmed cases were 19 303, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases, pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 2 357, 10 and 5 000 respectively.

Also, as the passenger flights (SQ882 and SQ894) operated by Singapore Airlines arriving in Hong Kong from Singapore, within a seven-day period (February 8 to 14) had four passengers who tested positive upon arrival, and the passenger flight (GA876) operated by Garuda Indonesia arriving in Hong Kong from Jakarta, Indonesia, on February 15 had 15 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 Singapore operated by Singapore Airlines and from Jakarta operated by Garuda Indonesia from February 16 to March 1.

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.

â€‹â€‹â€‹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 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.