

CHP investigates COVID-19 preliminary positive imported case at CentrePoint in Central

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (July 19) said that it is investigating a preliminary positive imported case of COVID-19 involving the L452R mutant strain.

The case involves a 27-year-old male patient who lives at CentrePoint, 72 Staunton Street, in Central. He travelled to the United States (US) on July 4 and returned to Hong Kong on July 18. His specimen collected upon arrival in the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at Hong Kong International Airport tested preliminarily positive for COVID-19. The test result by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch revealed that the patient carries the L452R mutant strain but does not carry N501Y or E484K mutant genes. The patient has been asymptomatic.

As the Ct value of his specimen collected is relatively low (Ct value of about 21-24) indicating a high viral load, the patient is likely to have been infected recently in the US. The CHP has classified the case as an imported case.

During the past 21 days, the patient had stayed in Hong Kong from June 27 to July 4. As a prudent measure, the Government will make a restriction-testing declaration tonight for the building where the patient resided in Hong Kong (CentrePoint in Central). Residents of the building will also be subject to compulsory testing on Days 3, 7, 12 and 19 counting from the day on which the case is announced.

Moreover, the patient works in Pacific Plaza on 418 Des Voeux Road West and last went to work on July 2. His workplace and the places he had visited during the incubation period will be included in a compulsory testing notice. Specified persons who had been present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on or before the specified date.

The CHP's investigation reveals that the patient received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination on April 26 and May 17 in Hong Kong (Comirnaty vaccine). An epidemiological investigation and contact tracing of the case will continue.

The CHP strongly urged members of the public to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong, in particular to specified places with extremely high risk and very high risk under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H). If travel is unavoidable, the CHP highly recommends the public to be fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines before their departure with a view to lowering their chances of being infected with COVID-19 overseas. They should continue to wear a surgical mask and maintain strict personal and

environmental hygiene at all times. Parents are also urged to avoid taking unvaccinated children travelling. 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. Members of the public must seriously evaluate the risk of non-essential travel."

â€‹The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk).