

## CHP investigates five additional confirmed cases of COVID-19 and three additional Omicron cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, December 18, the CHP was investigating five additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 519 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 518 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases which involved mutant strains. The patients comprise three females and two males, aged 24 to 83. One of them arrived in Hong Kong from a Group A specified place (high-risk) with enhanced surveillance and the remaining four arrived in Hong Kong from Group A specified places (high-risk). One patient tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at Hong Kong International Airport and the other four tested positive during quarantine.

Meanwhile, the CHP provided an update on the latest investigations on three imported cases announced yesterday (case 12513, 12514 and 12515) involving three males aged between 27 and 36. The whole genome sequencing conducted by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch confirmed that the three cases all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. Case 12513 involves a local cargo crew member who underwent medical surveillance in accordance with the relevant requirements for exempted persons. He tested positive under regular compulsory testing. The Government has made a "restriction-testing declaration" earlier for the building where the patient resided in Hong Kong. The compulsory testing frequency has also been increased for persons who resided or worked at the same building as the residence of the case. The relevant persons will be subject to compulsory testing on December 18, 19, 20, 23, 28 and January 4 (see the details at [www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN\\_Specified\\_premises\\_and\\_Dates\\_of\\_Testing.pdf](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf)). Also, the CHP has arranged about 10 of his close contacts and about 10 household contacts of those close contacts to conduct quarantine at quarantine centre. No relevant confirmed case so far. The other two cases (12514 and 12515) tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the TSCC.

Together with the three aforementioned cases, there are so far 14 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

A total of 65 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (December 4 to 17) and all of them are imported cases.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website"

([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)).

â€‹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)."