

CHP investigates four additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, September 11, the CHP was investigating four additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 143 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 142 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases. Among them, case 12146 involves a 52-year-old male patient, who lives at Hong Kin House, Tsz Hong Estate, Tsz Wan Shan. He travelled to the United States of America on August 22 and tested negative in Hong Kong on August 20. He returned to Hong Kong on September 10 by flight JL735 and his specimen collected upon arrival in the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at Hong Kong International Airport on the same day tested positive for COVID-19 and carries the L452R mutant strain but does not carry the N501Y or E484K mutant genes. He has been asymptomatic and had received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (CoronaVac) on May 31 and June 28 in Hong Kong. Epidemiological investigation and contact tracing of the case is continuing. As a prudent measure, the building where he resided and the places he had visited during the incubation period had been included in a compulsory testing notice (CTN). Specified persons who had been present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on or before September 12.

A total of 49 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (August 28 to September 10) and all of them are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the CHP was notified of a confirmed case in the UK on September 10, which involved a female patient aged 54, who lives at 112A, Ma Yau Tong Village, Tseung Kwan O. She departed Hong Kong on September 3 for the UK via flight AY1337. She tested negative on September 2 in Hong Kong. Her specimen collected on September 5 in the UK tested positive for COVID-19 and she remains asymptomatic. She had received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) on July 18 and August 9 in Hong Kong. The CHP is following up on the case with the UK health authority and the epidemiological investigations of the case is ongoing. As a prudent measure, the buildings where she resided in Hong Kong during the incubation period have been included in a CTN. Specified persons who had been present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on or before September 12.

Furthermore, the CHP was notified of confirmed cases in Japan, which involved 16 sea crew members who worked on a cargo vessel (Ever Calm). The vessel arrived Hong Kong on September 1 and had cargo operation at Kwai Tsing Container Terminals No.4 from September 2 to 3. The sea crew members were tested positive for COVID-19 after arriving Osaka on September 9. As a prudent measure, the cargo vessel will be put under a CTN. Any person who had been present at the cargo vessel during the specified period has to undergo

compulsory testing on or before the specified dates.

In view of the fact that many recent imported cases have joined non-essential travel after vaccination, 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 urged 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)."

The spokesman reminded, "If travel is unavoidable, the CHP highly recommends the public to be fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines before their departure. They should avoid participating in non-essential mass gatherings or events held outside Hong Kong. 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 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 list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

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). Generally speaking, COVID-19 vaccination can prevent COVID-19 infection, and if infected, reduce the risk of severe disease and death from COVID-19.

The CHP called on members of the public to pay attention to their health condition, seek medical advice early and undergo COVID-19 nucleic acid testing as soon as possible if respiratory symptoms develop. They should also maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times, to protect themselves against infection and prevent the spread of the disease in the community.

On a personal level, members of the public should put on a surgical mask when they need to go out. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask. Hand hygiene should be performed frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing. Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds, then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative. Cover the mouth and nose with tissue

paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly.

â€œTo ensure household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) by pouring about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap). They should also pay attention to hygiene when using the toilet by putting the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs.