CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 1 052 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and 2 929 cases by RATs as well as 437 imported cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (November 1) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, November 1, the CHP was investigating 3 981 additional locally acquired cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, comprising 1 052 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (535 confirmed cases, 458 asymptomatic cases and 59 cases with pending status) and 2 929 cases that tested positive by rapid antigen tests (RATs) in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 437 additional imported cases were reported, including 412 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (70 confirmed cases, 322 asymptomatic cases and 20 cases with pending status) and 25 cases that tested positive by RATs. Among the additional imported cases, 284 of them involved samples at the airport, 107 of them involved samples during Day 1 to Day 3, and the remaining 46 involved samples during Day 4 to Day 7.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 999 663 and 923 463 cases that have tested positive by nucleic acid tests and RATs respectively for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The CHP is continuing with epidemiological investigations of the cases. Please refer to the Annex and the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for more information.

The CHP has been closely monitoring the situation of positive cases involving mutant strains by genetic analysis. As of 0.00am, November 1, the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) had identified 204 cases of sub-lineage XBB, six of XBD, eight of BA.2.75.2, six of BA.4.6, 11 of BF.7 and 23 of BQ.1.1 among imported cases in Hong Kong, while two cases of sub-lineage XBB, seven of XBD, one of BA.2.75.2 and eight of BQ.1.1 have also been detected among local cases.

Among the specimens received by the DH's PHLSB during October 23 to 29 for verification testing of local cases, about 0.1 per cent and 91.3 per cent of them (seven-day moving average) are related to the sub-lineages BA.2.12.1 and BA.4/BA.5 (including suspected cases) of the Omicron mutant strain respectively.

In addition, as of 0.00am, November 1, a total of 10 197 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 10 111 and 83 deaths reported

from the Hospital Authority and public mortuaries respectively as well as three deaths reported from the Chinese University of Hong Kong Medical Centre. Hong Kong has so far recorded a total of 10 410 death cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Furthermore, among the earlier cases by nucleic acid tests reported, there were cases (including pending cases) changed to confirmed, asymptomatic or re-positive cases. As at yesterday (October 31), the total number of confirmed cases was 435 027, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 318 837, 31 and 244 304 respectively.

The spokesman for the CHP said that COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. They can provide effective protection to those vaccinated in preventing serious complications and even death after infection. People who have yet to receive vaccination, especially senior citizens, chronic patients, children and other immunocompromised persons who face a higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, should get vaccinated as early as possible for self-protection and to reduce the risk of falling seriously ill and death should they get infected.

The CHP appeals to the community to keep on maintaining personal hygiene and comply with social distancing measures in order to jointly contain the risk of virus transmission. The spokesman reminded members of the public that they can call various hotlines to make enquiries on COVID-19 (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html#hotline).