

CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 1 168 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and 3 870 cases by RATs as well as 152 imported cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (September 24) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, September 24, the CHP was investigating 5 038 additional locally acquired cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, comprising 1 168 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (522 confirmed cases, 519 asymptomatic cases and 127 cases with pending status) and 3 870 cases that tested positive by rapid antigen tests (RATs) in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 152 additional imported cases were reported, including 143 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (13 confirmed cases, 83 asymptomatic cases and 47 cases with pending status) and nine cases that tested positive by RATs.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 943 292 and 798 311 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 "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for more information.

Among the specimens received by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch during September 15 to 21 for verification testing of local cases, about 3.3 per cent and 84.8 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, September 24, a total of 9 893 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 9 809 and 81 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 10 106 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 (September 23), the total number of confirmed cases was 411 085, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 289

227, 31 and 241 638 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 strongly appeals to the community to strictly comply with social distancing measures and refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or mass gatherings. This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community. 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).

In view of the stabilising local epidemic situation, the CHP will adjust the risk communication strategy for this stage. From tomorrow (September 25), the press briefing on updates of COVID-19 cases will be suspended. The CHP will continue to report daily positive cases with press releases and regularly update information of the "COVID-19 Thematic Website", as well as release relevant information via social media platforms, etc. The CHP will continue to closely monitor local and overseas situations, and release information as and when appropriate according to the development and need of the local epidemic situation.