

CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 1 185 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and 1 997 cases by RATs verified as well as 254 imported cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (July 18) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, July 18, the CHP was investigating 3 182 additional locally acquired cases tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, including 1 185 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests (520 confirmed cases, 530 asymptomatic cases and 135 cases with pending case status) and 1 997 cases tested positive by rapid antigen tests (RATs) verified in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 254 additional imported cases were reported, including 217 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests (nine confirmed cases, 186 asymptomatic cases and 22 cases with pending case status) and 37 cases tested positive by RATs.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 797 687 and 500 085 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 on the cases. Please refer to the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for more information.

Meanwhile, according to the analysis by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch, as of yesterday (July 17), Hong Kong had recorded a total of 19 cases, 1 223 cases and 989 cases carrying the sub-lineages BA.2.12, BA.2.12.1 and BA.4/BA.5 under the Omicron mutant strain respectively (including suspected cases), among which zero, 996 and 313 of them are local cases.

In addition, as of 0.00am, July 18, a total of 9 227 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 9 149 and 75 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 9 440 death cases that have 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, the total number of confirmed cases was 346 032, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and

pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 217 337, 24 and 232 892 respectively.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed that as the local situation of COVID-19 infection is still severe, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to continue to comply with social distancing measures, avoid going out and refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or gatherings. This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

The spokesman reminded 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 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.