

CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 1 344 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and 3 610 cases by RATs as well as 407 imported cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (October 17) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, October 17, the CHP was investigating 4 954 additional locally acquired cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, comprising 1 344 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (652 confirmed cases, 595 asymptomatic cases and 97 cases with pending status) and 3 610 cases that tested positive by rapid antigen tests (RATs) in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 407 additional imported cases were reported, including 367 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (37 confirmed cases, 302 asymptomatic cases and 28 cases with pending status) and 40 cases that tested positive by RATs. Among the additional imported cases, 272 of them involved samples at airport, 78 of them involved samples during Day 1 to Day 3, and the remaining 57 involved samples during Day 4 to Day 7.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 974 954 and 868 255 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 imported cases involving mutant strains by genetic analysis. As of 0.00am, October 17, 55, four, one and five cases of sub-lineages XBB, BA.2.75.2, BA.4.6 and BQ.1.1 respectively have been identified by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) among imported cases in Hong Kong.

Among the specimens received by the DH's PHLSB during October 8 to 14 for verification testing of local cases, about 0.9 per cent and 93 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, October 17, a total of 10 065 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 9 980 and 82 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 10 278 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 16), the total number of confirmed cases was 424 571, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 305 355, 31 and 243 286 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.

â€‹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. â€‹â€‹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).