

## CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 1 348 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and 4 111 cases by RATs as well as 135 imported cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (September 20) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, September 20, the CHP was investigating 5 459 additional locally acquired cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, comprising 1 348 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (573 confirmed cases, 643 asymptomatic cases and 132 cases with pending status) and 4 111 cases that tested positive by rapid antigen tests (RATs) in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 135 additional imported cases were reported, including 119 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (six confirmed cases, 92 asymptomatic cases and 21 cases with pending status) and 16 cases that tested positive by RATs.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 937 202 and 782 147 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](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)) for more information.

Among the specimens received by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch during September 11 to 17 for verification testing of local cases, about 3.6 per cent and 82.3 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, September 20, a total of 9 695 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 9 611 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 9 908 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 19), the total number of confirmed cases was 407 558, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 286

859, 31 and 241 287 respectively.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed that the local situation of COVID-19 infection is severe, with the number of cases tested positive growing at an increased pace. 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 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 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](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html#hotline)).