[CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 1 977 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and 6 866 cases by RATs as well as 665 imported cases](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (December 5) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, December 5, the CHP was investigating 8 843 additional locally acquired cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, comprising 1 977 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (985 confirmed cases, 827 asymptomatic cases and 165 cases with pending status) and 6 866 cases that tested positive by rapid antigen tests (RATs) in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 665 additional imported cases were reported, comprising 579 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (104 confirmed cases, 458 asymptomatic cases and 17 cases with pending status) and 86 cases that tested positive by RATs. Among the additional imported cases, 457 of them involved samples at the airport, 159 involved samples during Day 1 to Day 3, and the remaining 49 involved samples during Day 4 to Day 7.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 1 065 656 and 1 101 828 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, December 5, the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) had identified 225 cases of sub-lineage XBB, six of XBD, eight of BA.2.75.2, seven of BA.4.6, 13 of BF.7 and 36 of BQ.1.1 among imported cases in Hong Kong, while 104 cases of sub-lineage XBB, 18 of XBD, one of BA.2.75.2, four of BF.7 and 121 of BQ.1.1 have also been detected among local cases.

Among the specimens received by the DH's PHLSB during November 26 to December 2 for verification testing of local cases, 0 per cent and about 70.16 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, December 5, a total of 10 613 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 10 517 and 92 deaths reported

from the Hospital Authority and public mortuaries respectively as well as four deaths reported from private hospitals. Hong Kong has so far recorded a total of 10 826 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) that were changed to confirmed, asymptomatic or re-positive cases. As of yesterday (December 4), the total number of confirmed cases was 464 010, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 351 986, 31 and 247 073 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 complying 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).