

CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 2 239 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and 4 037 cases by RATs verified as well as 237 imported cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (August 21) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, August 21, the CHP was investigating 6 276 additional locally acquired cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, comprising 2 239 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (1 013 confirmed cases, 940 asymptomatic cases and 286 cases with pending status) and 4 037 cases that tested positive by rapid antigen tests (RATs) verified in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 237 additional imported cases were reported, including 196 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (14 confirmed cases, 141 asymptomatic cases and 41 cases with pending status) and 41 cases that tested positive by RATs.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 859 920 and 598 318 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.

As of yesterday (August 20), among the specimens received by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch for verification testing of local cases, about 8.4 per cent and 28 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) under the Omicron mutant strain respectively.

In addition, as of 0.00am, August 21, a total of 9 392 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 9 311 and 78 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 9 605 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, the total number of confirmed cases was 372 026, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and

pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 248 335, 31 and 237 093 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 the public 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.