

CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 2 986 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and 10 291 cases by RATs as well as 647 imported cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (December 9) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, December 9, the CHP was investigating 13 277 additional locally acquired cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, comprising 2 986 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (1 517 confirmed cases, 1 155 asymptomatic cases and 314 cases with pending status) and 10 291 cases that tested positive by rapid antigen tests (RATs) in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 647 additional imported cases were reported, including 543 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (98 confirmed cases, 419 asymptomatic cases and 26 cases with pending status) and 104 cases that tested positive by RATs. Among the additional imported cases, 358 of them involved samples at the airport, 207 of them involved samples during Day 1 to Day 3, and the remaining 82 involved samples during Day 4 to Day 7.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 1 079 682 and 1 138 032 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 9, the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) had identified 226 cases of sub-lineage XBB, six of XBD, eight of BA.2.75.2, seven of BA.4.6, 13 of BF.7 and 38 of BQ.1.1 among imported cases in Hong Kong, while 120 cases of sub-lineage XBB, 18 of XBD, one of BA.2.75.2, five of BF.7 and 140 of BQ.1.1 have also been detected among local cases.

Among the specimens received by the DH's PHLSB during November 30 to December 6 for verification testing of local cases, 0 per cent and about 64.24 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 9, a total of 10 701 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 10 603 and 94 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 10 914 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 (December 8), the total number of confirmed cases was 470 004, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 358 549, 31 and 247 569 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 comply 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).