

CHP investigates seven additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, September 24, the CHP was investigating seven additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 177 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 176 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases.

A total of 36 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (September 10 to 23) and all of them are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the CHP is investigating an overseas case of COVID-19 involving a 47-year-old male patient, who lives at Tower 11, Carmel Cove, Phase 3, Caribbean Coast, 1 Kin Tung Road, Tung Chung. He is a cargo flight crew member and tested negative in Hong Kong by sample collected on September 17. He travelled to Australia on September 20 by flight HX2017 and returned to Hong Kong on September 22 by flight HX2018. His specimen collected upon arrival in the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at Hong Kong International Airport on the same day tested negative and then he returned to his residence for medical surveillance. The CHP was notified yesterday (September 23) by the Australian health authority that his specimen collected in Australia on September 20 tested positive. He remained asymptomatic and was admitted to hospital for treatment. First sample collected after admission tested negative and the hospital will arrange further tests. He received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) on April 7 and April 29 in Hong Kong. The CHP is following up on the case with the Australian health authority. Epidemiological investigation and contact tracing of the case is continuing. As a prudent measure, the building where he resided in Hong Kong has been included in a compulsory testing notice yesterday. Specified persons who were present at the relevant venue at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on or before the specified date.

In view of the fact that many recent imported cases have joined non-essential travel after vaccination, the spokesman for the CHP stressed, "The global situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and there is a continuous increase in the number of cases involving mutant strains that carry higher transmissibility, and there are also reports of breakthrough infections in some vaccinated individuals. The CHP strongly urges members of the public to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong, in particular to specified places with high risk under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H)."

The spokesman reminded the public, "If travel is unavoidable, the CHP highly recommends the public to be fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines before their departure. They should avoid participating in non-essential mass

gatherings or events held outside Hong Kong. They should continue to wear a surgical mask and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times. Parents are also urged to avoid taking unvaccinated children travelling."

Separately, according to the testing and quarantine arrangements for local COVID-19 cases with mutant strains, the CHP reminded people that persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on days 3, 7, 12 and 19 following the announcement of the relevant confirmed cases by the DH. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day. Relevant deadlines of compulsory testing for respective specified premises are listed on the Government's website at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf

Specified persons in relation to the following specified premises are also reminded to undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the compulsory testing notice tomorrow (September 25):

- Tower 2, Phase 2A – Le Prestige, LOHAS Park, Tseung Kwan O

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk). The DH has also been closely monitoring the mutant strains of SARS CoV-2 and has uploaded the relevant information on Variants of Concern (VOCs) and Variants of Interest (VOIs), based on whole genome sequencing results, to the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/statistics/data/10/641/100135/6973.html). The data will be updated regularly.

The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk). Generally speaking, COVID-19 vaccination can prevent COVID-19 infection, and if infected, reduce the risk of severe disease and death from COVID-19.

The CHP called on members of the public to pay attention to their health condition, seek medical advice early and undergo COVID-19 nucleic acid testing as soon as possible if respiratory symptoms develop. They should also maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene at all times, to protect themselves against infection and prevent the spread of the disease in the community.

On a personal level, members of the public should put on a surgical mask when they need to go out. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask. Hand hygiene should be performed frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after

coughing or sneezing. Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds, then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative. Cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly.

â€œTo ensure household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) by pouring about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap). They should also pay attention to hygiene when using the toilet by putting the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs.