

CHP investigates seven additional confirmed cases of COVID-19 and seven additional Omicron cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, December 22, the CHP was investigating seven additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 549 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 548 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases which involved mutant strains. The patients comprise three males and four females, aged 22 to 61. One of them arrived in Hong Kong from a Group A specified place (high-risk) with enhanced surveillance, three from Group A specified places (high-risk), two from a then (day of arrival) Group A specified place (high-risk) and one from a then (day of arrival) Group B specified place (medium-risk). Five patients tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at Hong Kong International Airport and one tested positive during quarantine. Case 12551 is a close contact of an imported case confirmed previously (case 12532) and tested positive at the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre.

Among the above-mentioned cases, 12548 and 12549 involve a 61-year-old male patient and a 58-year-old female patient respectively, who live at Block 3, The Eldorado, 11 Sha Tseng Road, Yuen Long. They departed Hong Kong on December 2 for the United Kingdom (UK). They tested negative for COVID-19 on December 3 and 17 in the UK. They arrived in Hong Kong on December 20 from the UK by flight CX252 and their specimens collected upon arrival in the TSCC tested positive for COVID-19 and carried the N501Y mutant strain. The male patient developed symptoms on December 19 with a Ct value less than 20. The female patient is asymptomatic with a Ct value less than 20. Both patients received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) in Hong Kong. As a prudent measure, the places where they resided and visited in Hong Kong during the incubation period have been included in a compulsory testing notice on December 20. Specified persons who were present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on or before December 22.

A total of 70 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (December 8 to 21) and all of them are imported cases.

Meanwhile, the CHP provided an update on the latest investigations on seven imported cases announced on December 20 and December 21 (cases 12537, 12540, 12541, 12542, 12543, 12544 and 12545), involving six males and one female aged between 29 and 61. The whole genome sequencing analysis conducted by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch confirmed that the seven cases all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron. Four of them tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the TSCC and

three of them tested positive during quarantine.

Together with the seven aforementioned cases, there are so far 34 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for local COVID-19 cases with mutant strains, the CHP reminded that persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on specified dates in accordance with the announcement by the DH. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day (see the details of the buildings and dates of testing 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 (December 23):

- Cheung Hing Building, 44-48 Pitt Street, Yau Ma Tei
- Block 18A, Serenity Villa, 230A Tai Po Tau, Tai Po

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 "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

â€‹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)."