

CHP investigates six additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, October 23, the CHP was investigating six additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 320 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 319 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases. Five of the cases involved mutant strains, and the mutation test result of the remaining case is pending. The patients comprise five males and one female, aged 30 to 69. Four of them arrived in Hong Kong from Group A specified places (high-risk) and the other two arrived from Group B specified places (medium-risk). Case 12 320 is a close contact of imported cases confirmed previously (cases 12 307, 12 312 and 12 314) and he tested positive at a public hospital where he accompanied case 12 307. Case 12 321 is a close contact of the imported case 12 315 and he tested positive at the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre. The other four patients tested positive during quarantine and one of them tested positive at the designated quarantine facility (Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre).

A total of 60 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (October 9 to 22) and all of them are imported cases.

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 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, "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."

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.

â€‹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. For more related health advice, please refer to the website www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/health-advice.html.