

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, December 28, the CHP was investigating six additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 605 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 604 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases. Five of the cases involved mutant strains while the mutation test result of the remaining case is pending. The patients comprise six males, aged 16 to 61. Five of them arrived in Hong Kong from a Group A specified place (high-risk) with enhanced surveillance and one from a Group A specified place (high-risk). Two 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 12608 is a close contact of an imported case confirmed previously (case 12594) and tested positive at the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre. The remaining two patients (case 12609 and 12610) are local air crew members. They underwent medical surveillance and regular compulsory testing in accordance with the relevant requirements for exempted persons and their samples collected at a community testing centre (CTC) tested positive for COVID-19.

The latest epidemiological investigation reveals that case 12609 tested negative in Hong Kong on December 17 and left Hong Kong on December 21 for the United States (US) by flight CX844 and returned to Hong Kong on December 24 by flight CX841 from the US. His specimen collected upon arrival in the TSCC tested negative for COVID-19. His sample collected at a CTC on December 26 tested positive for COVID-19. He developed symptoms including headache, runny nose and cough on the same day. His Ct value was about 16 to 22. Case 12610 tested negative in Hong Kong on December 18 and 21 before his departure on December 23 by flight CX840 for the US. He returned to Hong Kong on December 25 by flight CX843 from the US. His specimen collected upon arrival in the TSCC tested negative for COVID-19. His sample collected at a CTC on December 27 tested positive for COVID-19. He is asymptomatic with a Ct value of about 31 to 33. The CHP has announced the cases' details last night (December 27)

(www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202112/27/P2021122700754.htm?fontSize=1).

Meanwhile, the CHP is investigating a preliminary positive imported case who had stayed in Hong Kong during the incubation period. The 44-year-old male patient is a local air crew member living at Tower 1, The SeaCrest, 1 Hang Kwai Street, Tuen Mun. He tested negative for COVID-19 in Hong Kong on December 14 and left Hong Kong on December 22 for the US. He returned to Hong Kong on December 25 by flight CX2807 from the US. His specimen collected upon arrival in the TSCC tested negative for COVID-19. The patient underwent medical surveillance and regular compulsory testing in accordance with the relevant requirements for exempted persons. His sample collected at a CTC

yesterday tested preliminary positive for COVID-19. He is asymptomatic with a Ct value of less than 30 involving N501Y and T478K mutant strains. The CHP's epidemiological investigations revealed that the patient had contact at his residence with case 12609 on December 25. He received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (Comirnaty) on May 29 and June 19 in Hong Kong.

As the above-mentioned three cases stayed in Hong Kong during the incubation periods, as a prudent measure, specified persons who were present at the relevant venues (including the places where the three cases resided and visited in Hong Kong during the incubation periods) at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on the specified dates.

A total of 108 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (December 14 to 27). One of them is an import-related case, while the rest are imported cases.

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 CTN tomorrow (December 29):

- Tower 2, Wing Fai Centre, 2-10 Luen Chit Street, Fanling
- 36B Tai Mei Tuk Village (except G/F), Tai Po
- Tower 3, The Visionary, 1 Ying Hong Street, Tung Chung
- Tower 7, Park Avenue, 18 Hoi Ting Road, Tai Kok Tsui

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).

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)."