

CHP investigates six additional confirmed cases of COVID-19 and follows up on compulsory quarantine arrangement concerning three imported cases involving local air crew

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, November 15, the CHP was investigating six additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 388 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 387 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 17 to 68 years. Five of them arrived in Hong Kong from Group A specified places (high-risk) and one from a Group B specified place (medium-risk). Two patients tested positive during quarantine and the remaining four tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at Hong Kong International Airport.

Among the above-mentioned cases, case 12388 involves a 36-year-old male patient who lives at Block 5, Rambler Crest, Tsing Yi. He travelled to South Africa on October 23 and returned to Hong Kong on November 11 by flight QR818. He tested negative in Hong Kong on October 22. His specimen collected upon arrival at the TSCC tested negative for COVID-19. His sample tested positive during quarantine at a designated quarantine hotel and carries the N501Y mutant strain but does not carry the L452R or E484K mutant genes. As a prudent measure, the place where he resided in Hong Kong during the incubation period has been included in a compulsory testing notice. Specified persons who had been present at the relevant venue during a specified period need to undergo compulsory testing on the specified date.

Separately, the CHP continues to follow up on the three imported cases involving local cargo crew who carry the L452R mutant strain. They are cases 12376, 12378 and 12387. Cases 12376 and 12378 arrived in Hong Kong from Germany on November 6 and their samples collected on November 8 tested positive. Case 12387 arrived in Hong Kong from Germany on November 7 and his sample collected on November 12 tested positive.

The CHP discovered from its epidemiological investigations and contact tracing that cases 12376 and 12378 both arrived in Frankfurt in Germany on November 1 and checked into the same hotel (Hyatt Regency Mainz) as arranged by their company (Cathay Pacific Airways Limited). Both of them claimed that they did not leave their rooms during their stay in the hotel and did not participate in any gatherings. Case 12387 arrived in Frankfurt on November 3

and also stayed in that hotel and he claimed that he did not leave his room during his stay in the hotel and did not have contact with cases 12376 and 12378. Epidemiological investigations revealed that the three patients might have acquired the infection during their stay in that hotel and that a cluster outbreak may have occurred. The CHP has immediately informed the health authority of Germany to follow up on the situation.

The CHP has also informed Cathay Pacific of the above preliminary investigation findings at once. As the cases may involve a suspected outbreak in the hotel, for prudence's sake, the CHP arranged compulsory quarantine in a quarantine centre for all crew members of that airline who had stayed in that hotel in Germany on or after November 1. Other inbound travellers arriving in Hong Kong who had stayed in that hotel on or after November 1 will also be arranged for compulsory quarantine in a quarantine centre. All these persons have to undergo the quarantine until the 21st day since the day they left that hotel.

A total of 35 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (November 1 to 14) and all of them 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 compulsory testing notice tomorrow (November 16):

- Harbour Pinnacle, 8 Minden Avenue, Tsim Sha Tsui
- Tower 1, Tower 2 and Tower 3, Hampton Place, 11 Hoi Fan 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)."