

CHP investigates six additional confirmed cases of COVID-19 and provides update on latest investigations on imported cases 12388 and 12404

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, November 25, the CHP was investigating six additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 418 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 417 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 two males and four females, aged 1 to 45. All of them arrived in Hong Kong from Group A specified places (high-risk). Four patients tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and the remaining two tested positive during quarantine.

A total of 37 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (November 11 to 24) and all of them are imported cases.

Also, regarding the cluster of two cases in the Regal Airport Hotel (cases 12388 and 12404), the CHP has arranged for a total of 12 persons who had stayed from November 11 to 14 in the three rooms to the left and to the right of the two rooms concerned (5111 and 5112) of the same hotel (12 rooms in total from room 5105 to room 5120) to undergo compulsory quarantine at the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre for 14 days (counting from the last day of staying in the hotel during the above period). No related case was detected so far.

Whole genome sequencing analysis by the University of Hong Kong further confirmed that both cases had highly similar genetic sequences and the viruses belonged to a newly emerged lineage, B.1.1.529. The sequences are similar to those found in South Africa and Botswana, supporting that case 12388 arriving in Hong Kong from South Africa was the index case. Scientific information on the public health significance about this lineage is lacking at the moment. It is classified by the World Health Organization as "Variants Under Monitoring". The CHP will closely monitor the latest developments.

As a passenger flight (RA409) operated by Nepal Airlines arriving in Hong Kong from Kathmandu, Nepal, on November 23 had one passenger confirmed to have COVID-19 by arrival testing, and three passengers failed to comply with the requirements specified under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap.

599H), the DH thus invoked Cap. 599H to prohibit the landing of passenger flights from Kathmandu operated by Nepal Airlines in Hong Kong from November 26 to December 9.

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 26):

- Way Man Court, 50-52 Village Road, Happy Valley
- Jovial Court, Peninsula Village, Discovery Bay, Lantau Island
- Winning House, 72-76 Wing Lok Street, Sheung Wan

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€‹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)."