

CHP investigates two additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, August 14, the CHP was investigating two additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 033 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 032 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases. Among them, case 12032 involves a 38-year-old female patient, who is a domestic helper resided at a house on Stanley Village Road in Stanley. She departed Hong Kong on June 18 for the United States and returned to Hong Kong via flight CX883 on August 1. Her testing result on July 29 before her departure was negative. Her specimen collected upon arrival in the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at Hong Kong International Airport tested negative for COVID-19. She remained asymptomatic and finished her 7-day quarantine at a quarantine hotel. Her sample on day 12 (August 12) tested preliminarily positive. The test result by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch revealed that the patient carries the L452R mutant strain but does not carry N501Y or E484K mutant genes. The CHP has classified the case as an imported case. As a prudent measure, the premises where she had visited during the incubation and infectious period in Hong Kong have been put under a compulsory testing notice. Specified persons who had been present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on or before tomorrow (August 15). The epidemiological investigation and tracing of the case are ongoing.

A total of 46 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (July 31 to August 13) including a local case with unknown sources while the rest are imported cases.

In view of the fact that many recent imported cases have joined non-essential travel after vaccination, 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 urged members of the public to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong, in particular to specified places with extremely high risk and very 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 recommended the public to be fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines before their departure. 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 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 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, vaccines can reduce the chance of transmission by those who have been vaccinated. People vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine can also generate herd immunity. Moreover, vaccination may help keep people from getting seriously ill even if they do get COVID-19.

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.

On a personal level, members of the public should put on a surgical mask when they need to go out. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask. Hand hygiene should be performed frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing. Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds, then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative. Cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly.

â€œTo ensure household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) by pouring about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap). They should also pay attention to hygiene when using the toilet by putting the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs.