

CHP provides update on eight additional Omicron cases and enhances infection control measures in designated quarantine hotels

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (December 21) provided an update on the latest epidemiological investigations of eight imported cases confirmed previously (cases 12529, 12530, 12531, 12532, 12533, 12534, 12535 and 12536). The whole genome sequencing analysis conducted by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch confirmed that the eight cases all carried the Variant of Concern Omicron.

The eight cases involve six males and two females aged between 20 and 68. Two patients tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA), five tested positive during quarantine and one tested positive in a test during her wait for transfer at the restricted area at HKIA. The details of the cases have been announced on December 19 and yesterday (December 20). Together with the eight aforementioned cases, there are so far 27 cases involving Omicron in Hong Kong.

A spokesman for the CHP said that, in view of the increasing risk posed by the Variant of Concern Omicron, apart from the comprehensive tightening of inbound control measures announced by the Government yesterday, the CHP will enhance contact tracing work and infection control measures for cases involving Omicron in order to prevent the spread of Omicron cases to community.

As some of the imported Omicron cases are confirmed in designated quarantine hotels, to further reduce the possible risk of infection, the CHP has requested the designated quarantine hotels concerned to take additional measures on infection control and surveillance. If an Omicron case had stayed in a designated quarantine hotel, daily testing will be arranged for those who have been staying in adjacent and opposite rooms of the room of the Omicron case until seven days after the transfer out of the patient concerned. For those who had stayed in the adjacent and opposite rooms within the same period but had completed compulsory quarantine at the hotel, the CHP will request them to go for additional testing in the community as soon as possible and advise them to avoid group gathering until they complete seven days of additional surveillance.

The CHP will ensure that the staff of designated quarantine hotels have received regular testing. It will also remind the hotels to enhance ventilation and infection control measures as well as conduct thorough disinfection of rooms.