

## CHP provides update on SARS-CoV-2 virus cases related to Moon Palace

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 3) provided updates on the epidemiological investigation and contact tracing of SARS-CoV-2 virus cases involving Moon Palace at Festival Walk. There are so far five cases (case 12611, 12637, 12654, 12673 and 12708) tested positive related to Moon Palace.

Among the above-mentioned relevant cases, case 12708 is an additional case announced today involving a 38-year-old female, who is the wife of case 12654 and had meal together at Moon Palace from around 2.30pm to 4pm on December 27. She went to a community testing centre for test in accordance with the relevant requirement of the compulsory testing notice (CTN) on December 29 and tested negative. She was classified as a household close contact and was arranged to conduct quarantine at Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre (PBQC) on December 30. She developed sore throat on January 1 and her specimen collected on January 2 tested positive with a Ct value larger than 30, carrying N501Y and T478K mutant strains. Her Ct value dropped to 25 after admission to hospital, indicating a recent infection preliminarily.

Moreover, the whole genome sequencing analysis conducted by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch confirmed that cases 12611, 12637 and 12654 have identical genetic sequences. The DH will continue to conduct whole genome sequencing analysis for the remaining cases.

Meanwhile, the CHP is investigating an additional case tested preliminarily positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus which is related to the Moon Palace. It involves a 66-year-old female living in Tower 2, Granville Garden, 18 Pik Tin Street in Tai Wai, who had meal at Moon Palace from around 12.30pm to 1.30pm on December 27. She went to a community testing centre for test in accordance with the relevant requirement of the CTN on December 29 and tested negative. She was arranged to conduct quarantine at PBQC on December 31 and tested negative on the same day. She developed sore throat and cough on January 2 and her specimen collected on the same day tested preliminarily positive with a Ct value larger than 30, carrying N501Y mutant strain. The patient is retired and has no recent travel history. She received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination (CoronaVac) on July 16 and August 13 in Hong Kong.

As a prudent measure, the Government has made a "restriction-testing declaration" tonight for the building where the patient resides (Tower 2, Granville Garden, 18 Pik Tin Street in Tai Wai) and persons who resided or worked at the buildings will be subject to increased compulsory testing frequency. The places where the patient had visited in Hong Kong during the incubation period will also be included in a CTN. Specified persons who were present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on the specified date.

The CHP is continuing its contact tracing work of cases related to Moon

Palace. The latest investigation revealed that there were a total of 207 customers who have patronised that restaurant during the relevant period of time, among which 201 have been arranged to conduct quarantine at PBQC. The CHP has earlier collected 44 environmental samples in which none of them tested positive. The CHP collected an additional 46 environmental samples today with the test results pending.

The Government has earlier exercised power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to require any person who had been present at Moon Palace from 1pm to 3pm on December 27 (including but not limited to visitors and workers), have to undergo testing by December 30. Moon Palace will be included in a CTN again for prudence sake and relevant persons will be required to undergo another test on or before tomorrow (January 4) and to report their testing results to the CHP. The CHP appeals again to those who had meals at Moon Palace from 1pm to 3pm on December 27 to call the CHP's hotlines at 2125 1111 or 2125 1122 as soon as possible to facilitate the CHP's epidemiological investigations and contact tracing.

â€‹The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to the relevant premises, and seriously follow up their compliance with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months. Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000).