

DH calls on community including ethnic minorities to fight Omicron variant threat together (with photos)

In response to the recent worsening of the local COVID-19 epidemic situation, with local infection cases also involving several foreign domestic helpers, the Department of Health (DH) today (January 12) appealed again to all sectors of the community, including ethnic minorities (EMs), to continue to work with the Government on its enhanced prevention and control work. To fight the Omicron variant threat together, the Government called on the public to closely pay heed to and follow the Government's prevention and control measures, testing arrangements, and to observe good personal hygiene and receive COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible.

As at January 11, a total of 35 cases were recorded in the EM large cluster involving community transmission of the Omicron variant, including four foreign domestic helpers who are confirmed or suspected cases of the Omicron variant.

The DH has always attached great importance to communication and connections with EMs. This provides timely and important epidemic information to EMs, such as the recent information series on "Do our part to fight the Omicron variant", "Tips for prevention of COVID-19 for foreign domestic helpers", "Recommendation for the third dose COVID-19 vaccination", "Social distancing measures under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance", "Appeal for virus testing" and "Understanding compulsory testing notices" on the thematic websites on COVID-19 (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) and the COVID-19 vaccination programme(www.covidvaccine.gov.hk), or on the Facebook page of the Centre for Health Protection (www.facebook.com/CentreforHealthProtection). In addition, the DH also maintains close contact with various stakeholders, including relevant Government bureaux and departments, relevant Consulates-General, employment agencies for foreign domestic helpers, EM groups, relevant support organisations and religious groups, with a view to communicating relevant health information through their channels.

Recently, the DH has been working with non-governmental organisations in producing a series of short videos and audio clips in different EM languages featuring invited representatives of local EM groups in a bid to allay EM groups' worries about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines and remind them to keep abreast of the news of the Omicron variant. The materials are disseminated through the thematic website and social media, e.g. the Facebook page of the Centre for Health Protection of the DH. Moreover, the DH has also arranged for relevant anti-epidemic information to be published in local newspapers and broadcast in radio programmes for EMs, including those in Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi (the Indian language), Nepali, Thai and Urdu (the Pakistan language).

Currently, the thematic website on COVID-19 (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) and the COVID-19 vaccination programme website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk) provide information in nine EM languages (Hindi, Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog, Nepali, Urdu, Thai, Bengali, Sinhala and Vietnamese). Selected materials have also been translated into French, Spanish, Punjabi and Tamil.

All along, the DH has been committed to disseminating timely anti-epidemic information to all sectors in society, including EMs. The DH appeals to members of the public to receive COVID-19 vaccination and get influenza vaccines as soon as possible, and support the Government's anti-epidemic work by reducing unnecessary social contacts, such as avoiding crowded places and social gatherings, and staying home as much as possible to minimise the risk of spreading the disease.

