

## USFH's opening remarks at press briefing on updates of COVID-19 cases (with video)

The Under Secretary for Food and Health, Dr Chui Tak-yi; the Head of the Communicable Disease Branch of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, Dr Chuang Shuk-kwan; and the Hospital Authority Chief Manager (Clinical Effectiveness and Technology Management), Dr Linda Yu, held a press briefing on the latest situation of COVID-19 this afternoon (March 19). Following are the opening remarks by Dr Chui:

Hong Kong is facing a new wave of public health risks from import-related COVID-19 infections. In the past two weeks, from March 5 to March 18, around 92 per cent are imported cases and cases related to their close contacts and those with travel history during the incubation period. Of these cases, only two involve non-Hong Kong residents, and the rest are Hong Kong residents.

The World Health Organization had declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic on March 11. Globally, the number of recorded cases has continued to surge to more than 200,000, with over 80,000 cases in the Mainland and more than 120,000 cases overseas. The HKSAR Government has issued the Red Outbound Travel Alert on all overseas countries and territories on March 17, and we advise against non-essential travel abroad.

From early this morning (March 19), all people arriving in Hong Kong who have been to any overseas countries/territories in the past 14 days are subject to compulsory quarantine. Meanwhile, the quarantine measures announced earlier for people arriving in Hong Kong who have been to two areas in Korea, Iran and also three regions in Italy, as well as Hong Kong residents returning from Hubei Province, in the past 14 days to stay in a quarantine centre for quarantine remain unchanged. The measure that all people entering Hong Kong from other parts of the Mainland apart from Hubei will be required to undergo compulsory quarantine upon their arrival also remains unchanged.

For those who have travelled or returned to Hong Kong earlier before these measures take place, please be mindful of personal hygiene and pay attention to social distance. Please continue to wear a mask for 14 days. Do avoid gatherings.

If one of your household members is under home quarantine, please pay attention to the health advice of the Department of Health.

For those who must leave Hong Kong, please be mindful of the potential health risks and the quarantine arrangements upon return to Hong Kong. Please put on a surgical mask all the time, avoid close contact with persons with a

fever or respiratory symptoms, avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities and crowded places, and seek medical advice at once if experiencing a fever or respiratory symptoms.

For those who have plans to come back to Hong Kong, please pay attention to the points to note on the plane to avoid the chance of infection.

For those who are overseas and have already developed symptoms, please consult a doctor and do not come back for your own good and for the health of other people.

For the friends of different ethnicities in Hong Kong, we have health tips for you at the Government's thematic website, [www.cornavirus.gov.hk](http://www.cornavirus.gov.hk)

The pandemic outbreak of COVID-19 has brought tremendous challenges to Hong Kong. To reduce the risk of importation of COVID-19 to Hong Kong, and to alleviate the pressure on our healthcare system, we need the co-operation and support of every one of you in Hong Kong in fighting against the virus. Thank you.