

CHP investigates five additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, October 18, the CHP was investigating five additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 12 300 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 12 299 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases are imported cases and all involved mutant strains. The patients comprise five males aged 29 to 59. Three of them arrived in Hong Kong from Group A specified places (high-risk) and two of them arrived from Group B specified places (medium-risk). Four of the patients tested positive during the "test-and-hold" arrangement upon arrival at the Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at Hong Kong International Airport, while the remaining one tested positive during quarantine.

A total of 68 cases have been reported in the past 14 days (October 4 to 17) including a local case with unknown sources, while the rest are imported cases.

Moreover, as two passenger flights (QR818) operated by Qatar Airways from Doha, Qatar, that arrived in Hong Kong on October 13 and 16 respectively, each had two passengers confirmed to have COVID-19 by arrival testing, the DH thus invoked the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H) to prohibit the landing of passenger flights from Doha operated by Qatar Airways in Hong Kong from October 18 to 31.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for local COVID-19 cases with mutant strains, the CHP reminded people that persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on days 3, 7, 12 and 19 following the announcement of the relevant confirmed cases by the DH. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day. Relevant deadlines of compulsory testing for respective specified premises are listed on the Government's website

at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf

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Specified persons in relation to the following specified premises are also reminded to undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the compulsory testing notice tomorrow (October 19):

- Golden Glory Court, Phase 1, Golden Lion Garden, 5-7 Chui Tin Street, Sha Tin

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 DH has also been closely monitoring the mutant strains of SARS CoV-2 and has uploaded the relevant information on Variants of Concern (VOCs) and Variants of Interest (VOIs), based on whole genome sequencing results, to the CHP's website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/statistics/data/10/641/100135/6973.html). The data will be updated regularly.

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 urges members of the public to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong, in particular to specified places with 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 recommends the public to be fully vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccines before their departure. They should avoid participating in non-essential mass gatherings or events held outside Hong Kong. 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 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, COVID-19 vaccination can prevent COVID-19 infection, and if infected, reduce the risk of severe disease and death from 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. For more related health advice, please refer to the website www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/health-advice.html.