

CHP investigates seven confirmed and nine asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (January 19) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, January 19, the CHP was investigating seven additional confirmed cases and nine additional asymptomatic cases in the past 24 hours (i.e. there were 16 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus confirmed by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch in those 24 hours). This brings the total number of confirmed cases to 12 880 so far, while the figures for asymptomatic cases and re-positive cases recorded since January 1 are 199 and three respectively, i.e. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 13 082 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The newly reported cases consist of nine imported cases, four cases epidemiologically linked with imported cases, two local cases, and one case epidemiologically linked with local case. Thirteen of the cases involve mutant strains, while the mutation test results of the remaining three cases are pending. The patients comprise 11 males and five females, aged 3 to 79. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

The four cases epidemiologically linked with imported cases are 13074 and 13075 (3-year-old girl and 42-year-old female who live in a unit 14, the same unit as the residence of case 13045 but on different floors at Tung Moon House, Tai Hang Tung Estate, Sham Shui Po), 13079 (16-year-old male who is a classmate of case 13069) and 13084 (8-year-old girl who stayed in the same hotel room with case 13045 during quarantine and is a family member of cases 13063, 13065, 13066 and 13068). The two local cases are 13072 (26-year-old female who lives in 72-74 Broadway, Mei Foo Sun Chuen Phase 3, Lai Chi Kok) and 13085 (79-year-old male who lives in Yat Kwai House, Kwai Chung Estate, Kwai Chung). The case epidemiologically linked with local case is 13073 (73-year-old male who is a family member of case 13059 living together).

A total of 305 cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus have been reported in the past 14 days (January 5 to 18). Seventy-two of them are epidemiologically linked with imported cases/possibly import-related cases, three are local cases, one is a case epidemiologically linked with local case, and the rest are imported cases.

According to the testing and quarantine arrangements for cases with mutant strains, persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases will be subject to compulsory testing on specified dates in accordance with the announcement by the DH. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day (see the details of the buildings and dates of testing at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/CTN_Specified_premises_and_Dates_of_Testing.pdf

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The CHP strongly reminded members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo the multiple tests on time as required. The compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. The Government will seriously verify whether they had complied 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). The Government reiterates that the aim of issuing a compulsory testing notice is to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the community as soon as possible to protect overall public health and safety.

With the higher transmissibility and risk of infection of the Omicron mutant strain, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to comply with the recently tightened social distancing measures in the next two weeks, and to refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or gatherings (particularly religious or cross-family activities and gatherings). This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

â€‹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)."