CHP investigates five additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 8pm today (March 8), the CHP is investigating five additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 115 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 114 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Two of the confirmed cases today are associated with the cluster related to the India tour group. One of the patients is a 76-year-old man (the 111th case) who is a member of the same tour group to India as the three patients of the 105th, 107th and 110th cases confirmed on March 4, 6 and 7 respectively. The patient visited India from January 31 to February 24. With long term illnesses, the patient lives in Block 31, Lower Baguio Villa, 550 Victoria Road, Southern District. He developed diarrhoea since February 23 and was identified and sent to Queen Mary Hospital (QMH) by the CHP during contact tracing on March 5. His respiratory samples were tested negative for COVID-19 virus and was transferred to Chun Yeung Estate quarantine centre. His deep throat saliva specimen was tested positive for COVID-19 virus last night (March 7) and was admitted to QMH for management. He is now in a stable condition. His wife who lives with him is quarantined and domestic helper is asymptomatic and will be quarantined.

Another patient is a 59-year-old woman (the 115th case) who joined the same tour to India from January 31 to February 24. The patient, with long term illness, lives in Block 1, La Grove, 83 Shap Pat Heung Road, Yuen Long. She was asymptomatic and sent to the quarantine centre as a close contact yesterday. Her deep throat saliva specimen was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today and was arranged to Queen Elizabeth Hospital for management. She is now in a stable condition. Her family members who live with her are all asymptomatic. Her husband is quarantined while her son, daughter and domestic helper will be arranged for quarantine.

The third case involves a 55-year-old man (the 112th case) who is the husband of the 83rd case who had visited the Buddhist temple named Fook Wai Ching She and the father of the 84th case confirmed on February 25. The patient has good past health and lives in Hong Fook Court, Bedford Gardens in North Point. He has all along been asymptomatic and earlier sent to the quarantine centre as a close contact. His respiratory specimen was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today. He is now under treatment at Tuen Mun Hospital and is in a stable condition. The patient had no recent travel history and had not visited Fook Wai Ching She. His close contacts (except the two confirmed patients), namely his daughter and mother are asymptomatic and are quarantined.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations revealed that the 112th case together with the patients of the 64th, 65th, 70th, 73rd, 74th, 76th, 77th, 83rd, 84th, 86th, 89th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 95th, 98th, 102nd and 103rd cases announced earlier (19 patients in total) had either visited Fook Wai Ching

She in Maylun Apartments in North Point in January or February or had association with confirmed cases who had been to the temple. People who had visited the temple on January 25 onwards are again urged to call the CHP hotline and those who developed relevant symptoms will be arranged to hospitals for treatment.

The fourth case involves a 47-year-old woman (the 113th case) who is a domestic helper of the 85th case confirmed on February 25 and is a close contact of the 90th case confirmed on February 26. The patient has good past health and lives at Block 4, Swiss Towers at 113 Tai Hang Road, Tai Hang. She has all along been asymptomatic and was earlier sent to the quarantine centre as a close contact. Her respiratory specimen was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today. She is now under treatment at Prince of Wales Hospital and is in a stable condition. The patient had no travel history during the incubation period. Her close contacts (except the two confirmed patients), namely her employer’s husband and son are asymptomatic and are quarantined.

The fifth case involves a 41-year-old man (the 114th case) who has good past health and lives at Envoy Garden, 108 Blue Pool Road, Happy Valley. He developed sore throat, headache, runny nose and malaise since March 6 and attended the Accident and Emergency Department at Ruttonjee Hospital on the same day. His deep throat saliva specimen was tested positive for COVID-19 virus today. He is now under treatment at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and is in a stable condition. The patient had travel history during the incubation period. He took the flight CX542 by Cathay Pacific from Hong Kong to Tokyo on February 19 and then CX505 by Cathay Pacific from Tokyo for transit in Hong Kong on February 21. He travelled with three daughters taking the flight CX225 by Cathay Pacific from Hong Kong to Glasgow via London on February 22 and then CX250 by Cathay Pacific from Glasgow for transit in London on February 28 and arriving Hong Kong on February 29. The patient's household contacts, namely his wife, three daughters and two domestic helpers are asymptomatic and will be arranged for quarantine.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. Quarantine will be arranged for close contacts while medical surveillance will be arranged for other contacts. For the progress on the contact tracing of the cases, please see annex.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "The CHP reminded members of the public that as the transmission of COVID-19 virus has been increasing around the world, they are advised to consider delaying all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong."

"Meanwhile, according to our preliminary epidemiological investigations, clusters are observed in local community involving large meal gatherings and other gatherings. Members of the public are urged to go out less and reduce social activities such as meals gatherings or other gatherings, and maintain appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible."

The spokesman said, "The CHP strongly urged the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in

the community. On the personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes."

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps); cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use; after using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

The CHP will report the cases to the World Health Organization, National Health Commission, Health Commission of Guangdong Province, Indian health authority and the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has set up a hotline (2125 1122) for public enquiries. The hotline operates from 8am to midnight daily. As at 4pm today, a total of 29 555 calls were received.

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public grasp the latest updates.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infection, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

• Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
• Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes; after touching public installations such as handrails or door knobs; or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
• Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a liter of water into each drain outlet (U-traps) to ensure environmental hygiene;
• Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
• After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
• Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled, performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;
• Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and
• When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical

advice promptly.

Members of the public are advised to consider delaying all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong. The public should take heed of the health advice below if it is unavoidable to travel outside Hong Kong:

• Do not travel to Hubei Province of Mainland where there is widespread community transmission of COVID-19 virus;
• Avoid unnecessary travel to Korea (especially Daegu and Gyeongsangbuk-do where the majority of the cases were reported); Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy and Veneto regions in Italy which cover Bologna, Milan, Venice and Verona, as well as Iran;
• When travelling to countries/areas with active community transmission of COVID-19 virus, the public should avoid close contact with persons with fever or respiratory symptoms. If it is unavoidable to come into contact with them, put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong;
• Avoid visiting hospitals. If it is necessary to visit a hospital, put on a surgical mask and observe strict personal and hand hygiene;
• Avoid touching animals (including game), poultry/birds or their droppings;
• Avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms;
• Avoid making close contact with patients, especially those with symptoms of acute respiratory infections;
• Do not consume game meat and do not patronise food premises where game meat is served;
• Adhere to food safety and hygiene rules such as avoiding consuming raw or undercooked animal products, including milk, eggs and meat, or foods which may be contaminated by animal secretions, excretions (such as urine) or contaminated products, unless they have been properly cooked, washed or peeled;
• If feeling unwell when outside Hong Kong, especially if experiencing a fever or cough, wear a surgical mask, inform the hotel staff or tour escort and seek medical advice at once; and
• After returning to Hong Kong, consult a doctor promptly if experiencing a fever or other symptoms, take the initiative to inform the doctor of any recent travel history and any exposure to animals, and wear a surgical mask to help prevent spread of the disease.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (March 8), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 25 patients (14 male and 11 female,

aged 2 to 85) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of COVID-19. Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

A 76-year-old female patient confirmed with COVID-19 infection (case No. 99) deteriorated and passed away today in Caritas Medical Centre at 5.13pm. There are 91 patients currently under isolation. So far, 58 patients who had COVID-19 infection have been discharged upon recovery.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

Updated information on Hospital Authority's Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance Programme

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) earlier announced the list of General Out-patient Clinics (GOPCs) and Accident and Emergency (A&E) Departments covered by the Enhanced Laboratory Surveillance Programme. The HA today (March 8) announced that one more GOPC will be covered by the Programme from tomorrow (March 9), making for a total of 64 GOPCs and 17 A&E Departments (see attached list).

MD announcement (2)

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at suitable intervals:

The Marine Department today (March 8) reminded masters, coxswains and persons-in-charge of vessels navigating in Hong Kong waters to proceed at a safe speed and exercise extreme caution because restricted visibility of less than 2 nautical miles has been reported.

Appropriate sound signals shall be made when underway or at anchor. All vessels must comply with the International Regulations for Preventing

Collision at Sea.

Also, when radar is used without the benefit of adequate plotting facilities, the information obtained from the equipment is rather limited and should be construed accordingly.

Visibility reports are broadcast by the Vessel Traffic Centre (VTC) on VHF channels 02, 12, 14, 63 and 67.

In the event of an accident, a report shall be made immediately to the VTC at Tel: 2233 7801.

ISD resumes publication and photo sales counter services tomorrow

The Information Services Department announced today (March 8) that its Publications Sales Unit and Photo Library at North Point Government Offices will resume sales counter services from tomorrow (March 9). The sales office will be open from 9am to 12.30pm and from 2pm to 6pm from Monday to Friday.

The Publications Sales Unit and the Photo Library will implement special infection control measures to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. All visitors will be required to check their body temperature before entering the sales office. Anyone whose body temperature is higher than the prescribed level, or who refuses to undergo the body temperature check, will not be allowed access. Visitors are required to wear a mask and all staff who need to have face-to-face contact with the public will also wear a mask.

To reduce social contact and avoid the gathering of people, members of the public are encouraged to purchase government publications and photos through the Online Government Bookstore (www.bookstore.gov.hk) and the online Government Photo Store (www.photostore.gov.hk) respectively.