

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 0.00am today (December 5), a total of 2 993 patients who tested positive for COVID-19 are currently hospitalised for treatment, including 411 new patients. Currently, there are 318 patients requiring oxygen therapy and 17 patients requiring ventilator support. Among the patients staying in isolation facilities, 704 patients are in isolation wards, 220 patients are in second-tier isolation wards and 580 patients are in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, of which 284 in total are new patients. There are 13 newly reported critical patients and 22 newly reported serious patients. There are a total of 70 patients in critical condition and 82 in serious condition, of which 21 critical patients are receiving intensive care. Moreover, there are 179 patients who have recovered, including 145 patients who have been discharged. In addition, 20 patients who passed away in public hospitals were reported.

In the past week, there were 358 COVID-19 patients who reside in residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) admitted to hospitals. The number is continuously higher than the 341 and 299 RCHE COVID-19 patients admitted in the fourth and the third week of November respectively. The Hospital Authority (HA) is very concerned and will closely monitor the situation. The HA will keep close communication with relevant government departments and RCHEs so as to enhance medical support to RCHEs through the outreach teams.

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.

CHP investigates locally acquired SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 1 977 cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and 6 866 cases by RATs as well

as 665 imported cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (December 5) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, December 5, the CHP was investigating 8 843 additional locally acquired cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus, comprising 1 977 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (985 confirmed cases, 827 asymptomatic cases and 165 cases with pending status) and 6 866 cases that tested positive by rapid antigen tests (RATs) in the past 24 hours.

Separately, 665 additional imported cases were reported, comprising 579 cases that tested positive by nucleic acid tests (104 confirmed cases, 458 asymptomatic cases and 17 cases with pending status) and 86 cases that tested positive by RATs. Among the additional imported cases, 457 of them involved samples at the airport, 159 involved samples during Day 1 to Day 3, and the remaining 49 involved samples during Day 4 to Day 7.

Hong Kong has recorded a total of 1 065 656 and 1 101 828 cases that have tested positive by nucleic acid tests and RATs respectively for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The CHP is continuing with epidemiological investigations of the cases. Please refer to the Annex and the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for more information.

The CHP has been closely monitoring the situation of positive cases involving mutant strains by genetic analysis. As of 0.00am, December 5, the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) had identified 225 cases of sub-lineage XBB, six of XBD, eight of BA.2.75.2, seven of BA.4.6, 13 of BF.7 and 36 of BQ.1.1 among imported cases in Hong Kong, while 104 cases of sub-lineage XBB, 18 of XBD, one of BA.2.75.2, four of BF.7 and 121 of BQ.1.1 have also been detected among local cases.

Among the specimens received by the DH's PHLSB during November 26 to December 2 for verification testing of local cases, 0 per cent and about 70.16 per cent of them (seven-day moving average) are related to the sub-lineages BA.2.12.1 and BA.4/BA.5 (including suspected cases) of the Omicron mutant strain respectively.

In addition, as of 0.00am, December 5, a total of 10 613 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 10 517 and 92 deaths reported from the Hospital Authority and public mortuaries respectively as well as four deaths reported from private hospitals. Hong Kong has so far recorded a total of 10 826 death cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Furthermore, among the earlier cases by nucleic acid tests reported, there were cases (including pending cases) that were changed to confirmed, asymptomatic or re-positive cases. As of yesterday (December 4), the total number of confirmed cases was 464 010, while the figures for asymptomatic

cases, re-positive cases and pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 351 986, 31 and 247 073 respectively.

The spokesman for the CHP said that COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. They can provide effective protection to those vaccinated in preventing serious complications and even death after infection. People who have yet to receive vaccination, especially senior citizens, chronic patients, children and other immunocompromised persons who face a higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, should get vaccinated as early as possible for self-protection and to reduce the risk of falling seriously ill and death should they get infected.

The CHP appeals to the community to keep on maintaining personal hygiene and complying with social distancing measures in order to jointly contain the risk of virus transmission. The spokesman reminded members of the public that they can call various hotlines to make enquiries on COVID-19 (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html#hotline).

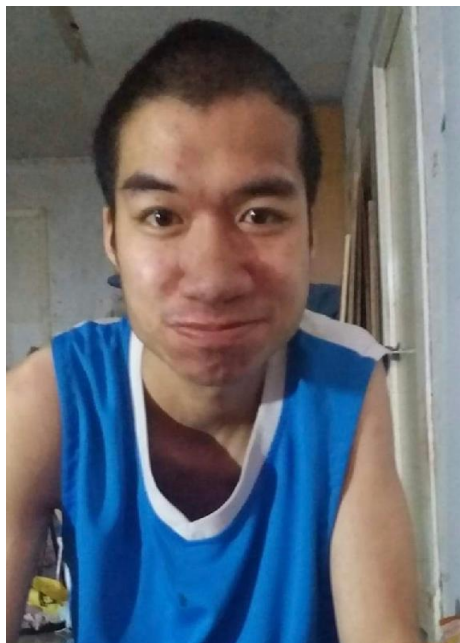
Appeal for information on missing man in Tseung Kwan O (with photo)

Police today (December 5) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Tseung Kwan O.

Heung Man-ki, aged 29, went missing after he left his residence in Ming Tak Estate on December 2 morning. His family reported to the Police yesterday (December 4).

He is about 1.7 metres tall, 63 kilograms in weight and of thin build. He has a long face with yellow complexion and short black hair. He was last seen wearing a blue jacket, dark-coloured trousers and dark-coloured sneakers.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Persons Unit of Kowloon East on 3661 0316 or email to rmpu-ke-2@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



Government follows up on positive results of sewage surveillance and appeals to residents to undergo virus testing

The Government announced today (December 5) that in order to fight the coronavirus epidemic, the Environmental Protection Department and the Drainage Services Department have been collecting sewage samples for virus testing in all districts, and had detected positive results in some areas, indicating that there may be hidden cases in the premises within these areas.

Rapid test

As regards positive sewage testing results with relatively high viral loads in the following areas, the respective District Offices will commence distributing about 50 000 sets of the COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) kits to residents, cleaning workers and property management staff working in the following areas for them to take the test on their own, in order to help identify infected persons:

- Sai Kung District – Mount Verdant and LOHAS Park – Grand Marini, Marini and Ocean Marini
- Eastern District – Aldrich Garden

Members of the public may refer to

(www.coronavirus.gov.hk/rat/eng/rat.html) for enquiries relating to the use of the RAT kits.

When using an RAT kit, please pay attention to and follow the instructions from the manufacturer to perform the test and read the result properly. It is advisable to record the displayed result by taking a photo immediately after reading. Users should wash their hands before and after performing the tests, and avoid placing non-essential items within the specimen collection area. After completing the test, wrap and seal all components of the test kit carefully and dispose properly. If the household environment is contaminated during the specimen collecting process, disinfection should be conducted with 1 in 49 diluted bleach solution or 70 per cent alcohol.

People who obtained a positive result through an RAT for the first time can report via the online platform "Declaration System for individuals tested positive for COVID-19 using Rapid Antigen Test" (www.chp.gov.hk/ratp). If individuals encounter difficulties using the online platform, they can call the automated system at 183 6119 to register their identification document and telephone number. The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health will contact the relevant person later to finish the report procedure.

HAD distributes complimentary COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff in Tsuen Wan and Sha Tin Districts

In light of positive test results for the COVID-19 virus from sewage samples collected in Tsuen Wan and Sha Tin Districts, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) said today (December 5) that the Tsuen Wan District Office (TWDO) and the Sha Tin District Office (STD0) have distributed a total of about 52 000 COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in the Districts.

The TWDO distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in The Cairnhill, Hong Kong Garden, Hong Kong Garden Yale Villa, Royal Sea Crest, Villa Alfavista, Anglers' Bay, Seascape Villa, Lung Tang Court and L'Aquatique for voluntary testing through the property management companies and the household representative. The TWDO also distributed rapid test kits to households living in Yuen Tun Village, Pai Min Kok Village in Sham Tseng and Tsing Lung

Tau New Village for voluntary testing through the Village Representatives.

In addition, the STDO also distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Kam Lung Court for voluntary testing through the owners' corporation and the property management company.

The HAD made the above arrangements in the hope of identifying infected persons early.

Members of the public may refer to the demonstration video produced by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) under the Department of Health (DH) via www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzFAUzTtmKk to learn how to use the rapid antigen test (RAT) kit.

Persons testing positive through an RAT should take a photo of the test result and declare the result within 24 hours via the Declaration System for Individuals Tested Positive for COVID-19 Using Rapid Antigen Test (www.chp.gov.hk/ratp). If members of the public encounter difficulties in using the online platform, they can call the automated system at 183 6119 to register their identification document and telephone number. The CHP under the DH will contact the relevant person later to complete the report procedure. There is no need to declare negative test results.

The Government appeals for the co-operation of members of the public to safeguard the health of themselves and their families by undergoing testing on a voluntary basis and fighting the virus together. The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases that tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons to reduce the transmission risks of COVID-19.