

CHP investigates 11 additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (April 11), the CHP was investigating 11 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 1 001 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 1 000 confirmed cases and one probable case).

In addition, the DH has been closely monitoring and reviewing the health quarantine and COVID-19 testing arrangements for inbound travellers. Starting April 9, asymptomatic inbound travellers arriving on flights from the UK are required to proceed to the DH's Temporary Specimen Collection Centre (TSCC) at the AsiaWorld-Expo to collect their deep throat saliva samples and wait for the test results there. The arrangement has been running smoothly.

Upon the assessment that among the imported cases confirmed locally, most of them have been to the UK, followed by the US and European countries, hence asymptomatic inbound travellers arriving on flights from the US and other areas in Europe are required to proceed to the TSCC to collect their deep throat saliva samples and wait for the test results there starting next Monday (April 13). If the number of passengers on the flights from the above areas exceed the maximum capacity of TSCC, the passengers will be allowed to go home or a designated place after specimen collection for compulsory quarantine.

If tested positive, they will be arranged for admission to hospital as soon as possible for treatment while the close contacts who travelled with them will be sent to designated quarantine centres. For those who are tested negative, they can go home or to a designated place to continue completion of the 14-day compulsory quarantine.

The newly reported cases announced today involve five males and six females aged between 19 and 59. Among them, 10 had a travel history during the incubation period and two are overseas students. 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.

The CHP urged members of the public to maintain an appropriate social distance with other people as far as possible in their daily lives. In particular, they should go out less and avoid social activities such as meal gatherings or other gatherings to reduce the chance of contacting infected persons, who may not present any symptoms, and minimise the risk of outbreak clusters emerging in the community.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "In view of the proliferation of the disease and continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges 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 a 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, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and 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, the National Health Commission, the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, relevant health authorities and the Hospital Authority.

The CHP has set up hotlines (2125 1111 and 2125 1122), which operate from 8am to midnight daily, for public enquiries. As at 4pm today, a total of 89 657 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 understand 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 performing 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 litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) 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.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at noon today (April 11), public hospitals had reported to the Department of Health the admission of 55 patients (31 male and 24 female, aged 2 to 75) in the past 24 hours who met the reporting criteria of COVID-19. Appropriate tests have been arranged for the patients.

There are 678 patients under isolation currently. So far, 336 patients who had COVID-19 confirmed or probable 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.

Missing man in Tin Sum located

A man who went missing in Tin Sum has been located.

Chan Kwok-wai, aged 37, went missing after he left his residence in Hin Keng Estate on March 22 afternoon. His family made a report to Police on April 2.

The man returned to his residence on April 7 afternoon. He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.

Submission of petitions before ExCo meetings continues to be suspended

The Executive Council will be on recess next Tuesday (April 14) and will resume on April 21. Given that the situation of novel coronavirus infection remains severe, the arrangement for the Chief Executive to receive petitions outside the Chief Executive's Office before she convenes the Executive Council's meeting will continue to be suspended after the resumption of meetings to minimise group gatherings until further notice. Meanwhile, members of the public can email their petitions to ceo@ceo.gov.hk or send them to the Chief Executive's Office of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Tamar, Hong Kong.

Transcript of remarks by CS at media session (with photo/video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at a media session after attending a radio programme this morning (April 11):

Reporter: So you said the people should monitor if the bosses are handing the subsidies to their workers, so what's the Government's role in this operation and how to prevent some of the bosses still asking the workers to go and have no-pay leaves, for example?

Chief Secretary for Administration: The entire purpose of the scheme is to ensure the continued operation of the enterprises concerned. It is incumbent on the employers concerned to ensure that there is no redundancy once they join the scheme. Also, it's more important to bear in mind that we should give them some flexibility in how to handle the exact so-called human resources policy of the respective enterprises. So that freedom, or that flexibility, is very important. But we've got two very important criteria. One is, as I said, no redundancy at all. The second thing is, all the subsidy from the Government for that particular purpose must go to paying staff salaries and not other purposes. A very restrictive approach. If they use the subsidy for other purposes, it will be totally unacceptable. We will claw back the money. Also, a very important safeguard is we'll ensure absolute transparency of the scheme. For any successful applicant, their amount of subsidy disbursed and so on will be released to the public, and also particularly to the employees concerned, so they know whether the employers have applied for the scheme and whether they are successful indeed. Finally, in Hong Kong we've got a very active media and also a very active trade union

movement here. I'm sure that all these are very important watchdogs. But of course if there is any criminal element involved – conspiracy, dishonesty and so on – we will act in accordance with the law. Any outstanding sum not used will be clawed back. We are also considering imposing a penalty for any deviation from the so-called regulation or rules imposed by the scheme. Now, all these need to be thrashed out in the next few days. We will be going to Finance Committee (FC) coming Friday. A special FC meeting will be lined up. Then the whole thing will go firm, because there are still some minor details yet to be thrashed out.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

