

CHP investigates 16 additional cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has announced that as of 4pm today (April 10), the CHP was investigating 16 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, taking the number of cases to 990 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 989 confirmed cases and one probable case).

The newly reported cases announced today involve nine males and seven females aged between 17 and 75. Among them, 15 had a travel history during the incubation period and eight 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 88 750 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 the 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.

Last affected Hong Kong passenger of Diamond Princess returns to Hong Kong

A spokesman for the Security Bureau (SB) said today (April 10) that the last Hong Kong resident who had contracted COVID-19 while aboard the Diamond Princess cruise ship earlier and was hospitalised in Japan has returned to Hong Kong. Staff of the Immigration Department (ImmD) who had been staying in Japan to assist the Hong Kong residents hospitalised or discharged from hospitals have also completed their mission and returned to Hong Kong today.

In early February this year, a cluster of confirmed COVID-19 infection cases occurred on the Diamond Princess cruise ship docked in Yokohama, Japan. Of the some 3 700 passengers and crew members initially on board, there were some 370 Hong Kong passengers. Among the 712 COVID-19 confirmed cases associated with the cruise ship, 76 patients were Hong Kong residents who were thereafter hospitalised in Japan for isolation and treatment. Three Hong Kong residents among them unfortunately passed away. The remaining 73 patients were discharged from hospital and have all returned to Hong Kong or their places of residence.

As for other Hong Kong residents on board the cruise ship, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government arranged three chartered flights to bring a total of 193 Hong Kong residents home between February 19 and 23. Upon arrival in Hong Kong, they were transferred to the quarantine centre at Chun Yeung Estate (CYE) for a 14-day quarantine. Another 144 Hong Kong residents returned on their own by other flights including 25 close contacts of the confirmed patients who had completed quarantine in Japan. For those who returned to Hong Kong on their own, had they not completed the 14-day quarantine at the land quarantine facilities in Japan, they were required to complete the remaining quarantine period at a quarantine centre upon arrival in Hong Kong. Of the 231 passengers of the Diamond Princess who were admitted to CYE for quarantine, nine subsequently tested positive for COVID-19 and had to be sent to hospitals for isolation and treatment.

The above operation of bringing Hong Kong residents home from Japan by chartered flights was led by the Under Secretary for Security and the Director of Immigration. Other members included a total of 75 officers from the SB, the ImmD, the Department of Health (DH) and the Hospital Authority (HA). The ImmD later dispatched 35 staff by batches as reinforcement teams to Japan to assist the more than 100 Hong Kong residents who were there at that time for medical treatment or undergoing quarantine. The DH also dispatched three doctors to Japan between February 26 and March 4 to assist the confirmed patients and their families.

The spokesman said, "The HKSAR Government expressed profound condolences on the passing of the patients and the deepest sympathies to their families. The incident could not have been resolved smoothly without the staunch support that the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR and the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Japan rendered to the HKSAR Government, as well as the co-operation given by the Japanese authorities, for which the HKSAR Government was deeply grateful. The HKSAR Government also expressed thanks to Cathay Pacific Airways again for accepting the commission to arrange the chartered flights, and to its crew members who volunteered to participate in the operation; the Hong Kong Airport Authority for its assistance in various aspects; the SB, the ImmD, the DH and the HA for executing the operation; as well as the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Tokyo for its continuous assistance in taking on the co-ordination role and the provision of on-site support."

Chartered flight taking Chinese citizens stranded in Morocco back home is flying to Guangzhou

A Government spokesman said today (April 10) that a chartered flight arranged by the Chinese Embassy in the Kingdom of Morocco (Chinese Embassy in Morocco) for taking Chinese citizens stranded in Morocco back home is now flying to Guangzhou. The chartered flight, with 27 Hong Kong residents on board, is estimated to arrive at the Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport at around 1pm today.

Morocco has been in a state of national emergency since early March, imposing strict restrictions on all marine, land and air traffic. As a result, Hong Kong residents in Morocco cannot depart there on their own through normal flight arrangement. To assist Chinese citizens stranded in Morocco to leave there, the Chinese Embassy in Morocco has arranged a chartered flight to bring the Chinese citizens, including 27 Hong Kong residents, back home. The chartered flight departed from Casablanca yesterday (April 9) and will arrive Guangzhou at around 1pm today. The cost is borne by the passengers.

As required under enhanced in-bound health management on the Mainland, all air passengers are required to undergo local 14-day isolation at a designated place for medical surveillance upon arrival in Guangzhou. Regarding the Hong Kong residents on board the chartered flight, after the discussions between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government and the Guangdong Provincial Government, it is agreed that these people who have completed the immigration procedures and provided with a nucleic acid specimen upon arrival at the Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport will take a coach arranged by the HKSAR Government to leave there and return to Hong Kong via Shenzhen Bay Port.

When entering Hong Kong, the travellers concerned must undergo temperature screening and submit a health declaration form. Then they will be sent directly to the Department of Health's Temporary Specimen Collection Centre at the AsiaWorld-Expo for conducting COVID-19 testing, and stay there to wait for the test results. If tested positive, they will be transferred to the Hospital Authority's facility for isolation treatment. If accompanying travellers are close contacts of these people, they must proceed to a designated quarantine centre for a 14-day compulsory quarantine even if their test results are negative. Other travellers will also need to return home to complete the 14-day compulsory quarantine.

Eighteen Hong Kong residents who are currently still in Morocco did not take the chartered flight to leave there because of personal preference or

other reasons. The HKSAR Government will continue to actively follow up with the Chinese Embassy in Morocco and a number of airlines to provide practicable and appropriate assistance to the affected Hong Kong residents and to make every effort to assist their return via other possible means.

Fatal traffic accident in Cheung Sha Wan

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Cheung Sha Wan last night (April 9) in which a 26-year-old man died.

At 9.53pm yesterday, a private car driven by a 27-year-old man was travelling towards Kowloon along Tai Po Road – Sha Tin Heights. When approaching near Kowloon Reservoir, it reportedly knocked down the 26-year-old man who was crossing the road.

Sustaining serious multiple injuries, the 26-year-old man was rushed to Prince of Wales Hospital in unconscious state and was certified dead at 0.40am today (April 10). A 22-year-old female passenger of the private car was also injured and sent to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in conscious state.

The private car driver was arrested for dangerous driving causing death and is being detained for further enquiries.

Investigation by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, Kowloon West is underway.

Anyone who witnessed the accident or has any information to offer is urged to contact the investigating officers on 3661 9000 or 3661 9058.

Red fire danger warning

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

The fire danger situation today (April 10) is red and fire risk is extreme. The countryside is extremely vulnerable to fire. If you are planning to spend the day in the countryside, please take pre-cooked food for a picnic and take all measures to prevent hill fires. The penalty for lighting fires illegally in the countryside is \$25,000 and a year's imprisonment.