

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (155) in DH CDB/9/12/6 Pt. 3

February 13, 2020

Dear Medical Superintendent,

End of 2019/20 Winter Influenza Season and Updated Situation of COVID-19

We write to inform you that the 2019/20 winter influenza season has ended, and provide you an update on the situation of coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19).

The seasonal influenza activity has decreased markedly over the past few weeks. The latest surveillance data of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) showed that the overall seasonal influenza activity in Hong Kong has returned to the baseline level. This winter season lasted about five weeks only with predominance of influenza A(H1N1) viruses. Please refer to the CHP's online weekly publication "Flu Express" for the latest situation of seasonal influenza: <https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/resources/29/304.html>

For COVID-19 caused by the novel coronavirus, according to the National Health Commission (NHC), there were 59804 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Mainland China with all provinces/cities reporting confirmed cases (as of 12 February 23:59). Among the cases, 8030 cases were in severe conditions and 1367 were fatal cases. Widespread community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring in Hubei.

According to the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, there were 1241 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Guangdong with 20 cities/areas affected (as of 12 February 23:59). As of 13 February 6pm, there were at least 347 cases of COVID-19 exported to other countries/areas. As the situation evolves rapidly, it is expected that further international exportation of cases may appear in any country. Information on the number of cases reported in various countries/areas is available on CHP's designated webpage: https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/statistics_of_the_cases_novel_coronavirus_infection_en.pdf



In Hong Kong, the CHP has enhanced surveillance since 31 December 2019. Apart from carrying tests for the novel coronavirus for suspected cases fulfilling our reporting criteria, the Hospital Authority (HA) has enhanced laboratory surveillance in public hospitals. Currently, all in-patients with community acquired pneumonia irrespective of their travel history will be tested for novel coronavirus. Around 550 – 850 tests have been performed per day.

As of 13 February 4:30pm, 51 confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been recorded in Hong Kong. The patients involved 28 males and 23 females with ages ranging from 22 – 91 years (median: 59 years). They had onset of illness between 18 January and 8 February 2020. Forty-one are in stable condition, three in serious condition, five in critical condition, one was discharged and one case died. Among the cases, 15 were imported cases or close contacts of imported cases, 17 were possible local cases or their close contacts, and 19 were local cases or their close contacts (**Table**). Of note, the majority of cases (35, 92%) reported since 1 February were local cases, possibly local cases, and their close contacts.

Table: Confirmed cases of COVID-019 recorded in Hong Kong (as of February 13, 2020)

Period	Case classification (tentative)	Number of cases
31 January 2020 or before	Imported cases	11
	Close contact of imported cases	1
	Possibly local case	1
1 February 2020 or after	Imported cases	3
	Possibly local cases and their close contacts	16
	Local cases and their close contacts	19
		Total: 51

A total of 13 clusters involving 36 cases have been recorded. The largest cluster affected a total of 11 confirmed cases out of 19 persons who had gathered at a party venue for hotpot on 26 January. The 11 cases had onset of symptoms between 28 January and 8 February. Two cases of this cluster spread the disease to another two co-workers resulting in secondary transmissions. Contact tracing and investigations for the confirmed cases are ongoing. The CHP has set up a hotline (2125 1122) to answer public

enquiries.

There is clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of novel coronavirus. Familial transmission is a hallmark of the recent cases recorded in Hong Kong. Also, some of the cases presented with mild symptoms only without obvious fever. Some cases had rapid deterioration after several days of illness. Hence, it is very important to remain vigilant for suspected cases especially patients who show no improvement after treatment. Early referral to an Accident and Emergency Department is warranted for patients with worsening of symptoms after treatment. In addition, you are reminded to strictly adhere to appropriate infection prevention and control measures including carrying out temperature screening for patients/clients/visitors upon their arrival at your hospital/clinic. Those with fever or respiratory symptoms should be advised to wear a surgical mask.

Please report suspected cases fulfilling the reporting criteria of “Severe Respiratory Disease associated with a Novel Infectious Agent” to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of CHP via fax (2477 2770), phone (2477 2772) or CENO On-line (https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html). Private doctors are reminded to call the Medical Control Officer (MCO) of DH at Pager: 7116 3300 call 9179 immediately when reporting any case. The CHP will make arrangement to transfer the patient to a public hospital by ambulance for isolation, testing and treatment.

Apart from personal and environmental hygiene, please advise your patients to maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-traps) to ensure environmental hygiene. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs. Please draw the attention of the healthcare professionals and supporting staff in your institution/ working with you to the above. May I take this opportunity to thank you for your continuous support in combating infectious disease in Hong Kong.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. SK Chuang)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health