

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (157) in DH CDB/9/12/6 Pt. 3

February 23, 2020

Dear Medical Superintendent,

Updated Situation of COVID-19 and Enhanced Surveillance in Out-patient Settings in the Hospital Authority

We write to provide you an update on the situation of coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19) and the enhanced surveillance implemented in General Out-patient Clinics (GOPCs) and Accident and Emergency Departments (AEDs) of the Hospital Authority (HA).

For COVID-19 caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, according to the National Health Commission (NHC), there were 76936 cases of COVID-19 in Mainland China (as of 22 February 23:59) with 2442 fatal cases. Among the 51606 cases still hospitalised, 10968 cases were in severe conditions. Widespread community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring in Hubei. According to the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, there were 1342 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Guangdong with 20 cities/areas affected (as of 22 February 23:59).

In places outside Mainland China, as of 23 February 6pm, there were at least 1242 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in 33 countries/areas. Community transmission has been occurring in some countries such as Italy (Lombardy and Veneto regions), Japan, Korea (Daegu and Gyeongbuk Province) and Singapore. Information on the number of cases reported in various countries/areas is available on the designated website for COVID-19: https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/statistics_of_the_cases_novel_coronavirus_infection_en.pdf

In Hong Kong, as of 23 February 6pm, 74 confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been recorded. The patients involved 40 males and 34 females with ages ranging from 22 – 96 years (median: 60 years). They had onset of illness between 18 January and 20 February 2020. Twelve patients were discharged and two died. Among the 60 patients who are hospitalised, 53 are in stable condition and 7 in serious condition. Among the 74 cases, 17 were imported cases or close contacts of imported cases, 23 were possible local cases or their close contacts, and 34 were local cases or their close contacts. While the initial cases recorded in January were



mostly imported or imported related cases, the majority of cases (56/61, 91.8%) reported since 1 February were local cases, possibly local cases, and their close contacts, indicating community transmissions locally. Transmission in closed settings especially households is a hallmark of the recent cases recorded in Hong Kong. A total of 19 clusters involving 52 cases (70%) were recorded. Contact tracing and investigations for the confirmed cases are ongoing.

In addition to the enhanced laboratory surveillance of COVID-19 for all in-patients with community acquired pneumonia (irrespective of travel history) in public hospitals, the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health has collaborated with HA to further expand the surveillance to GOPCs and AEDs since 19 February 2020. GOPC and AED patients aged 18 or above, presented with fever and respiratory symptoms or mild chest infection, will be given a specimen bottle for the collection of deep throat saliva in the early morning of the following day, if hospital admission is considered unnecessary according to clinical assessment. Patients are required to return the specimens to the AED or GOPC for SAR-CoV-2 laboratory testing. One confirmed case was detected through this surveillance so far.

As some cases present with mild symptoms and may have rapid deterioration after several days of illness, it is very important to remain vigilant for suspected cases especially patients who show no improvement after treatment. You may consider to refer suspected patients to GOPCs or AEDs for management and testing. Moreover, 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 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