



# The Coronavirus Disease 2019 News release

by Emergency Operations Center, Department of Disease Control

## **The Department of Disease Control and Ramathibodi Hospital are jointly verifying the cases detected with viral RNA fragments of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) in two Thai women who were about to travel abroad for employment**

The Department of Disease Control (DDC), Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) and Ramathibodi Hospital are jointly verifying the cases detected with viral RNA fragments of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) in two Thai women who were about to travel abroad for employment. Currently, the MOPH has coordinated with the local public health officers to investigate and advise close contacts in their families and communities.

Today (19 August 2020), Dr. Suwannachai Wattanayingcharoenchai, Director General of the Department of Disease Control (DDC) and Associate Professor Surasak Leela-Udomlipi, MD, the Director of Ramathibodi Hospital stated about the two Thai women who were found to have viral RNA fragments of SARS-CoV-2 virus while preparing to go work abroad. The DDC provided the information that they received a notice from Ramathibodi Hospital about two Thai women (a 34 and a 35 year-old) who had medical checkups for medical certificates requesting to work abroad. Their COVID-19 laboratory results found low viral RNA load but they had no fever and respiratory symptoms. Their samples are being sent for confirmatory test results by microbial culture to conclude the diagnosis. Currently, the two Thai women are at Ramathibodi Hospital. The hospital notified this information to the Department of Disease Control to verify for additional information.

Assoc. Prof. Surasak said that the first case is a 34 year-old woman who used to work in the United Arab Emirates. She arrived in Thailand on 2 June 2020 without any symptoms and was observed under state quarantine for 2 weeks. Her first laboratory results found the viral genetic material at low levels, and the conclusion of the test was "Inconclusive". The results of the second test on June 13th were negative. After completing the quarantine for 2 weeks, she was allowed to return to her homeland in Chaiyaphum province and isolated herself for 30 days. On 17 August 2020, she prepared to travel abroad for employment overseas, and she walked in to be tested for COVID-19 at Ramathibodi Hospital. The laboratory results on August 18th found minimal traces of SARS-CoV-2 genetic material and her blood samples were detected for immunity. She previously completed observation at the quarantine facility, and she is now admitted at the hospital.

The second case is a 35 year-old Thai woman who used to work in the United Arab Emirates and returned to Thailand on 24 June 2020. She was quarantined at State Quarantine for 2 weeks and the results of her tests were negative both times before she was allowed to return home to Loei. On 16 August 2020, she traveled to Bangkok via her personal car in order to make a plan for working abroad. On 18 August 2020, she was tested for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) by RT PCR test and her results were positive. Thus, Ramathibodi Hospital is monitoring her and admitted her for further medical treatment. According to the epidemiological data, the probability of infection for local transmission is very low. However, there is a need to further investigate in the same method as the previous case. If there are any updates, the information will be shared and reported further.

Dr. Suwannachai, said that after receiving reports on these events, the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) of the Department of Disease Control conducted a preliminary investigation to obtain a history of risk and close contacts of these two women. The JIT is currently working in coordination with local health offices to implement active case finding and contact tracing in their families and communities. Furthermore, the JIT is conducting further investigations and monitoring clinical symptoms with recommendations to continue prevention and control practices. In this regard, people should be confident in Thailand's intensive program of prevention and control measures. Officials in all sectors are working hard to investigate and control the disease, and ask the people to take care of themselves by strictly and continually complying with disease prevention measures including "Wearing masks, washing hands, separating personal items, keeping distance from others, and reducing gatherings." If people have any questions, they can ask for information at the Department of Disease Control hotline, call 1422.