



Novel Coronavirus 2019 Pneumonia News release

by Emergency Operation Center, Department of Disease Control

Special Announcement of the COVID-19 on 16 February 2020

1. The situation on 16 February 2020 at 8.00 A.M.

1. There are currently 19 confirmed cases of novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) being treated in hospitals and 15 cases who returned to their homes, which brings the total number of novel coronavirus infection cases detected in Thailand to 34.

2. From 3 January to 15 February 2020, the total number of patients under investigation (PUI) increased to 821 people. Of those, 54 PUI were detected from the airport screening and 767 people sought medical services on their own at hospitals, and 696 cases returned to their homes and under the investigation. Most of the PUI were infected with seasonal influenza, and 125 PUI are admitted at hospitals.

3. Regarding the international situation involving 27 countries and two administrative regions between 5 January to 15 February 2020 at 7.00 A.M., there were 67,185 confirmed cases and 1,527 deaths, with 66,496 cases and 1,523 deaths coming from the People's Republic of China.

4. The Ministry of Public Health needs the cooperation from the public to follow its recommendations. People should wear clean cloth hygienic masks when in crowded areas. The patients or people who have symptoms of coughing or sneezing should wear surgical masks to prevent the spread of infection. The staff who have close contact with the patients should wear an N95 mask.

2. The Ministry of Public Health reported that one additional confirmed case of COVID-19 can go back home

The Ministry of Public Health reported that one additional confirmed case of COVID-19, a 45 year-old Thai man, can go back home. The total number of patients who were discharged from the hospital is 15. MoPH prepared a 3 day countdown to send the Thai people who returned from Wuhan back home. MoPH confirmed all of them have good health.

Dr. Tanarak Plipat, Deputy Director – General of the Department of Disease Control stated, regarding the COVID-19 situation, that today, one confirmed case of COVID-19 can go back home. The patient is a 45 year-old Thai man with a history of close contact with travelers. Currently, the total number of patients who were discharged from the hospital and can go back home is 15. There has been no report of additional patients. The latest patient is a healthcare worker in a private hospital. Now, the healthcare worker still remains in an isolation room at Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute. 23 other healthcare workers who worked in the same unit entered the surveillance system from the beginning and did not have symptoms of fever.

Infection among healthcare workers has already been found in China, Japan, France and Thailand. Therefore, MOPH has reiterated healthcare workers and public health officials at all levels to strictly comply with infection control measures protecting workers from exposure to COVID-19 from the patients. Tomorrow, a video conference will be held to emphasize all hospitals to prevent and control transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19.

The Thai people who returned home from Wuhan at Sattahip Naval Base, are all in good health, without fever and no additional people met the criteria for patients under investigation (PUI).

The monitoring and observation will be completed on 18 February 2020. On 19 February, 2020, they will start to be allowed to return back to their homes. The MOPH has contacted their family members to pick them up at the guest area of Sattahip Naval Base and prepared necessary action for those who will travel home by themselves. The MOPH assured the best care for all Thais and has provided a continuous monitoring system.

Everyone will receive infection prevention and control practice handbooks, together with personal protective equipment (PPE) such as surgical masks and alcohol-based hand sanitizer. The group of Thai people that will be allowed to return to their normal lives and assured by the MOPH that they are not infected patients.

In addition, there has been local transmission in Japan and Singapore, therefore, Thailand strictly implemented the disease screening among passengers travelling from the said countries at all points of entries. Thailand also strengthened the COVID-19 prevention and control measures by organizing training to provide knowledge on disease prevention and control to village health volunteers. This kind of training will be beneficial for village health volunteers in disseminating and sharing the right information on how to prevent disease transmission to their family, relatives and people in their communities. People are recommended to eat cooked food, use a serving spoon, frequently wash hands, wear a mask and exercise.

MoPH in collaboration with relevant partners has still strictly implemented the disease screening at all points of entries including groundports, airports and seaports. Regarding the Westerdam cruise, which was not allowed to dock in Thailand, the decision made by the Thai government was right because the health security of Thai people is most important. However, Thailand has already coordinated with the aforementioned cruise and submitted all passenger information to Thai immigration offices for surveillance.

Today, there were 35 passengers (34 foreigners and 1 Thai) making a transit at Suvarnabhumi Airport and none of them had a fever after screening. All Thai people who come back from international trips will be followed up in accordance with the disease prevention and control standards. Currently, there are two Thai passengers with no fever after screening from the said cruise and they will be followed up for 14 days.

3. The results of implementation at Health Control

From 3-23 January 2020, the Department of Disease Control has been implementing the surveillance protocol by fever screening of arrival passengers of direct flights from Wuhan, China at the Suvarnabhumi, Don Mueang, Chiang Mai, Phuket and Krabi airports. On 24 January, the screening protocol began to be implemented at Chiang Rai Airport. The screening protocol has expanded to cover all arrival and departure flights from China at Suvarnabhumi Airport from 29 January to 15 February 2020. There were a total of 827 flights and 67,121 passengers and air crew members that were screened for the disease. An accumulated number of people that were screened at Suvarnabhumi airport both arrival and departure flights was 1,512,955 persons. For more effective screening throughout 24 hours, MoPH has also provided staff to assist the health officers at points of entry.

- For the screening protocol outside the airports, there were 68,075 people that were screened at five sea ports (Bangkok, Laem Chabang, Chiang Saen, Phuket and Samui) since 1 January and 440,043 people at the ground ports and 33,456 at the Government Complex Commemorating His Majesty at Chaengwattana Road.



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- All passengers will receive a Health Beware Card from immigration officers and health officers at health control.