



# Novel Coronavirus 2019 Pneumonia News release

by Emergency Operation Center, Department of Disease Control

## Special Announcement of COVID-19 on 17 February 2020

### 1. The situation on 17 February 2020 at 8.00 A.M.

1. There are currently 20 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 35.

2. From 3 January to 17 February 2020 at 11.00 A.M., the total number of patients under investigation (PUI) increased to 837 people. Of those, 55 PUI were detected from the airport screening and 782 people sought medical services on their own at hospitals. 703 cases returned to their homes and are under investigation. Most of the PUI were infected with seasonal influenza, and 134 PUI are admitted at hospitals.

3. Regarding the international situation involving 27 countries and two administrative regions between 5 January to 16 February 2020 at 7.00 A.M., there were 71,242 confirmed cases and 1,770 deaths, with 70,461 cases and 1,765 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 patients should wear an N95 mask.

### 2. The Ministry of Public Health reported one additional confirmed case of COVID-19 in a Chinese tourist

The Ministry of Public Health reported one additional confirmed case of COVID-19 in a Chinese tourist. The MoPH increased the surveillance of screening in three groups.

Dr. Sukhum Karnchanapimai, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Health and his team stated about the COVID-19 situation, that today, a group of experts in three areas (clinical management, epidemiology, and laboratory) reported one additional confirmed case of COVID-19 in a 68 year-old female Chinese tourist. She was a close contact with the 22nd confirmed case and was being followed up. She had a fever and cough, so she was admitted to the hospital (She is the 4th patient in her family cluster) and is the 35th confirmed case in Thailand.

The MOPH has expanded surveillance for active case finding in three groups by 1) enhancing screening of patients with pneumonia symptoms of unknown cause and people who have been in close contact with travelers who journeyed from outbreak areas of COVID-19, 2) elevating levels of guest screening at International Communicable Disease Control Office and hospitals for people travelling from China, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, Taipei, Japan, Singapore and reported outbreak countries, community outbreak areas are also included, 3) a special stepping up of surveillance in hospitals for people who have travel history from countries with reported cases of local transmission.

This morning, Deputy Prime Minister and Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul canceled his flight to Mae Sot district by his private jet due to poor visibility. He instead joined a video conference with MOPH teams, the Tak provincial governor and teams to give them consistent infection prevention measures at Mae Sot in order to raise public confidence and ensure people from all agencies have jointly cooperated for disease control measures.



# Novel Coronavirus 2019 Pneumonia News release

by Emergency Operation Center, Department of Disease Control

Regarding the Westerdam Cruise, the passengers on the cruise are the high-risk group. The MOPH has implemented the following two main measures:

1. For Thai passengers returning home, they will be followed up for 14 days in accordance with the disease prevention and control standards. If anyone would like to continue to travel, they will be screened. If the results identify a fever, they will not be allowed to get on a plane and will be brought to the tracking system for disease surveillance.

2. For foreigners, they will not be allowed to make a transit or change flights in Thailand. The MOPH has coordinated with airlines, immigration offices, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the airports of Thailand and emphasized that if foreigners have necessary to enter Thailand, they need to strictly comply with the disease prevention and control measures, i.e. wearing a mask, washing hands, informing information to the staff and being screened before getting on the plane. If anyone shows symptoms including fever and cough, they will be brought to the tracking system for Thailand's disease surveillance immediately. The disease surveillance in passengers from the Westerdam Cruise has been implemented by Thailand after the first COVID-19 confirmed case was reported.

For laboratory diagnosis, the DMSC has strengthened and developed the capacity of Real-time RT – PCR kits which have a high accuracy and rapid performance. For the next phase, DMSC will expand the usage of the said RT - PCR kits to other general hospitals so that they are able to detect and diagnose the virus. In addition, DMSC and FDA will register the real-time RT – PCR kits for government approval so that both public and private general hospitals can utilize the effective kits for diagnosing COVID-19 and can assure medical safety to the public.

Today a video conference was held among Chief Medical Officers of Provincial Public Health Offices in the issues for the orders of the Emergency Operations Center on Medical and Public Health as follows: 1) Campaigning for the public to regularly wash hands and using cloth masks and clean surface areas that may be a source of infection, especially among the group of public transport operators and foreign tourist service providers 2) Provinces with docks, airports and international points of entry need to set a disease control checkpoint to screen all passengers and people coming in and going out of the points of entry, especially in Bangkok and its surrounding provinces, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Chon Buri, Krabi and Phuket, by integrating surge capacities of health personnel in provinces including nearby regional health areas and health personnel from the Department of Disease Control.

- 3 Providing necessary medical supplies such as face masks, alcohol gel for hand sanitizing, and clean, ready-to-use, work clothes for staff. 4. Arrangement of surveillance and investigation officers, contact tracing of cases among healthcare workers, prepare isolation rooms and specialized wards for respiratory diseases 5. Use of the Communicable Disease Committee mechanism at the provincial level to drive and communicate the screening protocols, clinical management medical treatment for private hospitals in the province 6. Proceed according to the instructions strictly and perform the activity report.

At the Sattahip Naval Base, none of 137 Thai people arriving from Wuhan who returned to the Sattahip reception building have fever or met the criteria of PUI. One case is admitted to Chonburi Hospital who is in a normal condition without fever, cough and nasal discharge. All returning Thai people will be allowed to return home on 19 February 2020.



# Novel Coronavirus 2019 Pneumonia News release

by Emergency Operation Center, Department of Disease Control

### 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. There were a total of 827 flights and 70,377 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 70,394 people that were screened at five sea ports (Bangkok, Laem Chabang, Chiang Saen, Phuket and Samui) since 1 January and 466,698 people at the ground ports and 33,456 at the Government Complex Commemorating His Majesty at Chaengwattana Road.

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

### 4. The daily recommendation for preventing COVID-19

It is recommended to frequently wash hands with water and soap or use alcohol gel, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and strictly comply with the recommendations "eating cooked food, using serving spoons and washing hands." Frequently keep clean the areas that people frequently touch, such as doorknobs, railings, push-buttons at elevators, handrails on public buses.