

Special Announcement of COVID-19

on 26 February 2020

1. The situation on 26 February 2020 at 8.00 a.m.

1. There are currently 16 confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) being treated in hospitals and 24 cases who returned to their homes (60% of the total cases), which brings the total number of coronavirus infection cases detected in Thailand to 40.

2. From 3 January to 26 February 2020 at 11.00 A.M., the total number of patients under investigation (PUI) increased to 1,798 people. Of those, 72 PUI were detected from the airport screening and 1,726 people sought medical services on their own at hospitals. 1,247 cases returned to their homes. Most of the PUI were infected with seasonal influenza, and 551 PUI are admitted at hospitals.

3. Regarding the international situation involving 35 countries, two administrative regions and one cruise between 5 January to 26 February 2020 at 7.00 A.M., there were 80,427 confirmed cases and 2,712 deaths, with 77,666 cases and 2,664 deaths coming from the People's Republic of China.

2. The Ministry of Public Health reported good news: two more patients with novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) have fully recovered. New COVID-19 cases who had returned from Japan were confirmed. The MOPH is preparing to enforce the law after patient's concealing of travel history

The Ministry of Public Health reported two COVID-19 patients recovered and were discharged. There were new confirmed COVID-19 cases who returned from Japan and transmitted the virus to family members. The MOPH is preparing to enforce the law for anyone who does not disclose travel history.

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Public Health Anutin Charnvirakul, along with Deputy Public Health Minister Sathit Pitutecha, Permanent Health Secretary Sukhum Karnchanapimai and the executive team have reported on the COVID-19 situation that today, doctors have allowed two treated patients to return home. One patient is a 35 year-old Thai woman who received treatment at Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute and the other patient is a 62-year-old Chinese man who was treated at the Central Chest Institute of Thailand. Both of them were close contacts of confirmed cases.

Today, the MOPH received a report of laboratory test results from the Department of Medical Sciences and Chulalongkorn University. Three new confirmed cases of COVID-19 from the same family members were reported. The first one is a 65 year-old Thai male, who had traveled to Japan and was admitted at a private hospital with a cough and a fever on 23 February 2020. He later tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19, and was referred to the Central Chest Institute of Thailand. The second case is a 62 year-old Thai woman (the wife of the 65 year-old man that was infected while traveling in Japan). The third case is an 8 year-old boy (the grandchild) who is a close contact with the first case and he was being treated at Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute. Currently, all close contacts at high risk are being followed up. Travel companions are being traced for diagnosis. Currently, MOPH assured that Thailand is still in level 2, as sustained local transmission has not yet happened. Furthermore, Thailand does not have any Super Spreader patients. 24 cases were discharged from the hospital, 16 cases still remain in the hospital and the cumulative number of patients is 40. There were 26 cases which were infected from outside Thailand (index cases) or early cases which were reported in the system and the other 14 confirmed cases were high risk contacts of those confirmed cases.

The MoPH announcement regarding COVID-19 as a Dangerous Infectious Disease is beneficial for prevention and control implementation to prevent people from the disease. This announcement will

allow health officers and staff to easily apply the measures under the law to detect the virus more quickly, i.e. the new case found in the family returning from Japan. In addition, MoPH is in the process of imposing the law after finding some people who concealed their travel history and prohibits risky people from entering the country (e.g. sending two passengers from the Diamond Princess Cruise back to their countries). Thailand strictly implemented the highest level of measures to control the disease transmission after finding new confirmed cases in passengers returning from Japan.

The MoPH strictly implemented the disease screening in PUI and announced to expand the high-risk countries, areas and target groups. In addition, MoPH expanded the laboratory testing to 13 medical science centers including regional and provincial hospitals in the country. At the central level, laboratory testing can be done at the Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital, Ramathibodi Hospital, Chulalongkorn University, Rajavithi Hospital, Bamrasnaradura Institute and Bumrungrad International Hospital.

Thailand asks for public cooperation to not schedule a trip or travel to an area where there is ongoing local transmission. If you cannot avoid that, take care of yourself, frequently wash your hands, and wear a mask. When returning, monitor your symptoms for 14 days. If you have a fever or cough, see a doctor and report travel history. Do not be afraid to tell the doctor that you are traveling from an affected country. It is beneficial for the patient to be diagnosed and be treated quickly. As for the general public, do not stigmatise patients with the virus causing COVID-19 to prevent an occurrence of Super Spreader. The stigmatisation will have negative consequences for the patient for not going to the doctor, going to the doctor late, or refusing to protect themselves because of fear of being disgusted by society. Please follow news from the Ministry of Public Health only. Do not share information that does not have an identifiable source. If you have any questions, call the Department of Disease Control hotline 1422.

3. The daily recommendations for preventing COVID-19

It is recommended to frequently wash hands with water and soap or alcohol gel, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth if not necessary, strictly comply with the recommendations “eat cooked food, use serving spoons and wash hands,” and 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. Staff and healthcare workers who have close contact with patients should wear an N95 mask.

4. Recommendation to the Public

4.1 If anyone has symptoms including fever, sore throat, respiratory tract infection symptoms such as runny nose, cough, reproductive cough, tachypnea or dyspnea within 14 days after departing from a risk or affected area, they should wear a hygienic mask, wash their hands and seek medical care at a nearby hospital or meet public health officers immediately, and inform the healthcare workers of their travel history to reduce the risk of complications from pneumonia progressing to severe or fatal outcomes.

4.2 A person with an underlying disease should avoid traveling outbound, where there is an ongoing outbreak. If this is unavoidable, people should avoid making contact with patients who have respiratory symptoms, avoid visiting markets selling live animals and avoid close contact with animals, especially with sick or dead animals.

4.3 For the general public, please take care of yourself during seasonal changes and comply with the recommendations “eat cooked food, use serving spoons, wash hands,” and wear masks while coughing, sneezing, and avoid making contact with patients who have respiratory symptoms.