

Special Announcement of COVID-19

on 27 February 2020

1. The situation on 27 February 2020 at 8.00 a.m.

1. There are currently 13 confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) being treated in hospitals and 27 cases who returned to their homes which brings the total number of coronavirus infection cases detected in Thailand to 40.

2. From 3 January to 27 February 2020, the total number of patients under investigation (PUI) increased to 2,064 people. Of those, 76 PUI were detected from all ports' screening and 1,988 people sought medical services on their own at hospitals. 1,352 cases returned to their homes and some of them are being monitored. Most of the PUI were infected with seasonal influenza, and 712 PUI are admitted at hospitals.

3. Regarding the international situation involving 46 countries and administrative regions between 5 January to 27 February 2020 at 7.00 A.M., there were 81,406 confirmed cases and 2,771 deaths, with 78,073 cases and 2,715 deaths coming from the People's Republic of China.

2. Three more recovered from COVID-19 and returned to their homes

The Ministry of Public Health announced that three COVID-19 cases were discharged from hospitals, a new channel with a Chatbot is open for the public to ask questions or to leave messages for officers to answer.

Dr. Narong Saiwong, Deputy Permanent Secretary and Spokesman of Ministry of Public Health, Dr. Taweessin Visanuyothin, Senior Medical and Spokesman of Ministry of Public Health, Dr. Sopon Iamsirithaworn, Director of Division of Communicable Diseases and their team stated about the COVID-19 situation that today, three COVID-19 cases recovered and can go back home. Two cases were discharged from Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute, the first one is a 63 year-old Chinese man and the second one is a 49 year-old Thai man. The other case is a 33 year-old Chinese woman and was discharged from Rajavithi Hospital. 27 confirmed cases were discharged from the hospital, as 13 cases still remain in the hospital and the total number of confirmed cases is 40.

The MOPH has traced all high-risk close contacts of the three confirmed cases that were reported yesterday (26 February 2020), including family members, travelers from the same group tour, healthcare workers and classmates. All high-risk close contacts have already been traced back. The high-risk close contacts are people who have a high risk of transmission from infectious patients include 1) people who have direct contact with patients or have talked with a patient in a close proximity, defined as 1 meter for 5 minutes, or had contact with secretions of an infectious patient from coughing or sneezing without protective equipment such as a mask

2) people living with an infectious patient in closed areas without sufficient ventilation such as in an air-conditioned vehicle or an air-conditioned room, in close proximity, defined as within 1 meter around the patient for 15 minutes, without protective equipment.

Low-risk close contacts are those who have a low chance of transmission from patients including people who do not meet criteria of high-risk close contacts.

Since there are many people asking for information about COVID-19 through the DDC Hotline 1422 (30 lines have been arranged for the general public), the Department of Disease Control opened

new channels of communication called “คร. OK” Chatbot and “รู้ทันทันโรค” Line Application to provide information and recommendations including FAQ to the public. People can listen to the automated messages or leave a question or message through these kinds of channels and an officer will respond back.

In the meantime, Mr. Anuthin Charnveerakul, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Health Minister, approved and signed the MoPH announcement declaring COVID-19 as a Dangerous Infectious Disease yesterday (26 February 2020) and will announce it in the Royal Thai Government Gazette for legal enforcement on the following day.

Travelers from affected areas should always report travel history because concealing travel history from the high-risk areas has no benefit for anybody; furthermore it is harmful to put your close contacts and coworkers at risk of the virus causing COVID-19. Do not be afraid to tell the health care provider of your history to exposure risks. We assure that Thailand’s public health capacities have sufficient potential for taking care of and treating the population. Nonetheless, Thailand requires the cooperation of the people to participate in preventing the spread of the disease. If you are at-risk and have suspected illness, reduce the risk and separate yourself from others, protect yourself and others by wearing a mask, wash hands often, do not share personal items with others, and stop using public transportation services. For people traveling back from affected areas and need to continue working, please work from home by consulting your supervisor, observe your symptoms, and measure your temperature for fever every day.

3. Recommendations to the Public

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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.