

Special Announcement of COVID-19 on 1 March 2020

1. The situation on 1 March 2020 at 8.00 a.m.

1. There are currently 11 confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) being treated in hospitals, 30 cases who returned to their homes and 1 death, which brings the total number of coronavirus infection cases detected in Thailand to 42.

2. From 3 January to 1 March 2020 at 11.00 A.M., the total number of patients under investigation (PUI) increased to 2,953 people. Of those, 92 PUI were detected from screening at all ports of entry and 2,861 people sought medical services on their own at hospitals. 1,748 cases returned to their homes and some of them are continually being monitored. Most of the PUI were infected with seasonal influenza, and 1,205 PUI are still admitted at hospitals.

3. Regarding the international situation involving 60 countries and two administrative regions between 5 January to 29 February 2020 at 7.00 A.M., there were 85,983 confirmed cases and 2,941 deaths, with 79,257 cases and 2,835 deaths coming from the People's Republic of China.

2. MOPH emphasizes that if a patient is suspected to be a case of COVID-19, to report to the Disease Control officers within 3 hours

The Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) emphasizes that the Communicable Disease Act is in effect today. If anyone finds a suspected case or people who meet the criteria of COVID-19, reporting within 3 hours to disease control officers is mandatory. Any person who violates or fails to comply with the order shall be liable to a fine not exceeding twenty-thousand Thai baht. Two more cases were discharged and one severe case has died.

Dr. Suwannachai Wattanayingcharoenchai, Director-General, Department of Disease Control. Dr. Taweessin Visanuyothin, Senior Medical and Spokesman of the Ministry of Public Health and Dr. Sapon Iamsirithaworn, Director of Division of Communicable Diseases stated about COVID-19 that the Ministry of Public Health determined that COVID-19 is the 14th dangerous communicable disease in Communicable Diseases Act B.E. 2558 and the effective date is 1 March 2020. In case a patient or suspected case is found, they must report to the disease control officers under the conditions and process of the MoPH, within three hours. If someone breaks the law, they shall be liable to a fine not exceeding twenty-thousand Thai baht.

Regarding the dog in Hong Kong that tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19, no such situation has been reported in Thailand. There is ongoing surveillance and further search for more academic information. The MOPH recommended pet owners to keep them and their dogs clean and frequently wash hands after touching any dogs.

Today, there are two confirmed cases of COVID-19 that fully recovered and were discharged. The first patient is a 33 year-old Chinese male and the second patient is a 3 year-old Thai girl. Both of them were treated at Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute. Regarding the two severe cases, one of them has died, a 35 year-old man. The patient had dengue fever and was later diagnosed with COVID-19 as a comorbidity. He was transferred from a private hospital to Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute where he was treated with effective antiviral drugs. The patient had tested negative for COVID-19 since 16 February 2020.

The said patient was under medical treatment for almost one month with severe health conditions including deterioration of lung function and abnormal function of his heart and internal

organs. These severe conditions finally led to multiple organ failure causing the death of this patient. The virus causing COVID-19 was not detected in this patient before his death, therefore, the MoPH will bring this issue to the technical committee under the National Communicable Disease Committee to determine the cause of death.

For the other severe case with a TB co-infection, the patient has already tested negative for the virus causing COVID-19 for one week. However, this patient is still under medical attention at the hospital. Now, there are 30 patients who recovered from the disease, 11 cases admitted at the hospitals and 1 fatal case (a total of 42 cases).

As for the distribution of hygienic masks for the public at the Ministry of Public Health tomorrow, this campaign is followed by the policies of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Public Health. The masks will be provided for people who cannot buy them for personal use and for their families to reduce the burden of household expenses. The provided masks can prevent pathogens causing diseases, and is supported by the Government Pharmaceutical Organization's public donation. The free masks that will be distributed to the public will be different from those masks allocated to health care service personnel. The masks for health care providers are allocated as required by notification from the health care services to the Provincial Public Health Offices and the respective Health Regions. Those masks must be sufficient for providing services to patients.

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 the 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.