

Special Announcement of COVID-19 On 19 March 2020

1. The situation on 19 March 2020 at 8.00 a.m.

1. There are currently 229 confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) being actively treated in hospitals, 42 cases have recovered and have been sent home, and there has been one death, which brings the total number of COVID-19 cases detected in Thailand thus far to 272.

2. From 3 January to 19 March 2020 at 11.00 A.M., the total number of patients under investigation (PUI) was 8,157 people. Of those, 305 PUI were detected from screening at ports of entry and 7,852 people sought medical services on their own at hospitals. 5,106 cases have recovered and returned home. Most of the PUI were infected with seasonal influenza, and 3,051 PUI are still admitted at hospitals.

3. As of 7:00 a.m. on 19 March 2020, since 5 January 2020 the international situation involves 168 countries, two special administrative regions of China, and cruise ships. There were 212,799 confirmed cases and 8,787 deaths. 80,894 of these confirmed cases and 3,237 of these deaths are from the People's Republic of China.

2. The MOPH reported 60 new cases of COVID-19

The Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) reported 60 additional cases of COVID-19 in Thailand. The Ministry asked the cooperation from people who visited boxing stadiums and entertainment spots to strictly follow the instructions from the MOPH.

Dr. Suwannachai Wattanayingcharoenchai and his team stated about the COVID-19 situation that today, there are 60 new patients. The classifications for the two groups are as follows:

The first group consists of 43 patients who had close contact history with confirmed cases or were involved with places that had confirmed cases. 12 confirmed cases had history of going to boxing stadiums, 14 confirmed cases had history of going to entertainment spots, 12 confirmed cases had history of close contact with previous cases and five cases had history of joining a religious ceremony in Malaysia.

The second group consists of 17 additional confirmed cases. Nine confirmed cases came back from abroad, three confirmed cases had history of close contact with foreigners, one confirmed case had history of working or living in a crowded place and four are pending additional investigation.

For the three severe cases, the first case is a 49-year-old Thai man admitted at the intensive care unit at Surathani Hospital. The patient received dialysis, but has not regained consciousness. The second case is a 67-year-old Belgian man admitted at Phetchabun Hospital. He is not conscious and requires intubation. He has a history of cardiovascular disease and is receiving drug treatment. The third case is admitted for treatment at the Bamrasnaradura Hospital.

For the group of 83 people returning from Italy and residing at Sattahip Naval Base, none of them have a fever, yet still need to be under medical surveillance until the termination of the 14 day quarantine.

As of today, there are 42 patients who recovered from the disease, 229 patients currently admitted at the hospital, 3 patients with severe conditions and 1 death (total number of confirmed cases is 272).

The current situation involves new cases who were exposed to high-risk groups of close contacts by working in entertainment spots, having contact with tourists, as well as having contact with a family member who was a close contact with confirmed cases. Since 12 March 2020, this case report involves a total of 57 cases. For the group of cases related to the boxing stadium, the spread of infection has been observed with the organizer, the owner of the Muay Thai boxing camp, the host, the master of ceremonies, visitors including their close family members, friends, and close contacts. From 14 March 2020 until now, there have been a total of 52 cases involved. It is possible that infected people residing in other provinces outside Bangkok can bring the infection back to close family members or other people in their hometowns. Importantly, there are some high-risk (not sick) people who are not quarantining themselves according to the recommendations of the Ministry of Public Health to refrain from public activities with others in society, which is very dangerous to others. It is therefore an essential reason for the Ministry of Public Health to recommend avoiding/refraining from going to crowded places because they are high-risk areas. The government has now authorized the provincial governors with the approval of the Provincial Communicable Disease Committee to consider temporarily closing places that are at-risk of spreading disease, such as pubs, restaurants, entertainment venues, boxing stadiums, etc. until the situation improves.

The MOPH recommended people to refrain from unnecessarily traveling to outbreak risk areas. If anyone meets the criteria of high risk close contacts (i.e. family members, close friends, colleagues of confirmed cases, people joining the same party with confirmed cases, being part of the audience of a boxing or football match, sitting next to or in the same vehicle with confirmed cases), they are recommended to honor their social responsibility by strictly implementing self-quarantine at home, informing disease control officers when developing the suspected symptoms including fever, coughing, runny nose and sore throat. It is also recommended to wear a mask when seeking medical treatment at the hospital and inform the risk history to the doctor. It is also recommended to not share personal belongings with others, to eat cooked food and to use an individual serving spoon if separating dishes cannot be practiced.

3. Advice for the general public

Please follow the news from the Ministry of Public Health. If there are any questions, you can ask at the Department of Disease Control Hotline 1422, 24 hours per day or at the website:

<https://ddc.moph.go.th/viralpneumonia/eng/index.php>, Twitter, Facebook, Line official, Tik Tok “ไทยรัฐสู้โควิด” and Line official ChatBot 1422 “Kor-Ror-OK”, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health. People can check for scams at the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society at www.antifakenewscenter.com