

Special Announcement of COVID-19 On 20 March 2020

1. The situation on 20 March 2020 at 8.00 a.m.

1. There are currently 278 confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) being actively treated in hospitals, 43 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 322.

2. From 3 January to 20 March 2020 at 11.00 A.M., the total number of patients under investigation (PUI) was 8,729 people. Of those, 325 PUI were detected from screening at ports of entry, and 8,404 people sought medical services on their own at hospitals. 5,404 cases have recovered and returned home. Most of the PUI were infected with seasonal influenza, and 3,325 PUI are still admitted to hospitals.

3. As of 7:00 a.m. on 20 March 2020, since 5 January 2020, the international situation involves 175 countries, two special administrative regions of China, and cruise ships. There were 236,054 confirmed cases and 9,817 deaths. 80,928 of these confirmed cases and 7,263 of these deaths are from the People's Republic of China.

2. MOPH reported 50 new cases of COVID-19, one case has recovered and returned home.

The Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) reported 50 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19, one case - a French man has recovered, been discharged and returned home. The MOPH requires all people who live in an area with a large number of COVID-19 cases to not return to their hometowns and strictly quarantine themselves at homes or residences.

Dr. Satit Pitutecha, Deputy Minister of Public Health, Dr. Suwannachai Wattanayingcharoenchai, Director General of the Department of Disease Control and their team stated about COVID-19 that today, one patient, a 36 year-old French man was discharged from the Central Chest Institute of Thailand and returned home. There were 50 additional confirmed cases and they are divided into two groups as follows :

The first group consists of 41 patients who had close contact history with confirmed cases or were involved with places that had confirmed cases. 18 confirmed cases had history of going to the boxing stadium, 5 confirmed cases had history of going to entertainment spots, 12 confirmed cases had history of close contact with previous cases and six cases had history of joining a religious ceremony in Malaysia.

The second group consists of 9 additional confirmed cases. Four confirmed cases came back from abroad, two confirmed cases had history of working or living in crowded places or had close contact with foreigners and three are pending additional investigation.

There is a group of the new confirmed cases who are linked to the cluster of infections at the boxing stadium and religious gathering in Malaysia, all of them received positive results for the COVID-19 test. However, 118 cases need additional investigation. Now there are 24 provinces reporting COVID-19 cases, with the highest density in Bangkok, followed by Samut Prakan, Chiang Mai and Pattani.

Today, 43 cases have been discharged, 278 cases were being treated in hospitals, 3 cases are in severe condition and one death which brings the total number of confirmed cases to 322 cases.

The MOPH is continually finding many patients who were close contacts of confirmed cases at boxing stadiums and entertainment spots. It is estimated that many close contacts will develop symptoms and illness during the following 14 days. Above all, if this group of close contacts fails to properly implement their self quarantine, the virus will be transmitted to many other people and it will increase the number of people in the subsequent generations of close contacts that need to be monitored and under surveillance for 14 days. The actions of people not complying with the MOPH recommendations will lead to the virus widely spreading to further generations.

Therefore, the MOPH requested to identify people and patients living in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region and surrounding areas who visited risk areas i.e. boxing stadiums and entertainment spots (staff, officers, visitors and the audience) to refrain from traveling back to their hometowns. It is recommended to strictly implement self-quarantine at home, stop work or work from home, not attend social activities, not make contact with other people, keep at least 2 meters away from other people and not share personal belongings with others. For people who do not develop the suspected symptoms including fever, coughing, runny nose, sore throat and body aches, the MOPH recommends them not to visit the hospital for COVID-19 testing since the opportunity to detect the virus is still quite low and a negative result at the early phase does not mean that they are safe from getting the infection.

3. Advice for the general public

Please follow the news from the Ministry of Public Health. If there are any questions, ask at the Department of Disease Control Hotline 1422 for 24 hours per day or website: <https://ddc.moph.go.th/viralpneumonia/eng/index.php>, Twitter, Facebook, Line official, Tik Tok “ไทยรัฐ สู้โควิด” 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