

Special Announcement of COVID-19

On 26 March 2020

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

1. There are currently 953 confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) being actively treated in hospitals, 88 cases have recovered and have been sent home, and there have been four deaths, which brings the total number of COVID-19 cases detected in Thailand thus far to 1,045.

2. As of 7:00 a.m. on 26 March 2020, since 5 January 2020, the international situation has involved 194 countries, two special administrative regions of China, and cruise ships. There were 457,930 confirmed cases and 20,780 deaths. 81,218 of these confirmed cases and 3,281 of these deaths are from the People's Republic of China. 74,386 of these confirmed cases and 7,503 of these deaths are from the Italian Republic.

2. MOPH reported 111 new COVID-19 cases, 18 cases were discharged.

The Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) reported 111 additional cases of COVID-19 infection, 18 cases have been discharged and returned to their homes. The MOPH emphasized all hospitals/clinics to strictly implement the infection disease prevention and control measures and requested people to not conceal information about their risk history regarding the COVID-19 situation.

Dr. Anupong Sujariyakul, Senior Expert In Prevention Medicine, Department of Disease Control stated about COVID-19 that today, 18 confirmed cases were discharged from the hospital and returned home. There were 111 additional confirmed cases and they are divided into three groups as follows:

The first group consists of 29 patients who had close contact history with confirmed cases or were involved with places that had confirmed cases. There are six confirmed cases with history of going to a boxing stadium, three confirmed cases with history of going to entertainment spots, 19 confirmed cases had history of close contact with previous cases and one confirmed case with history of joining a religious gathering in Malaysia.

The second group consists of 19 additional confirmed cases. Six confirmed cases returned from abroad, nine confirmed cases had a history of working or living in crowded places or had close contact with foreigners, three confirmed cases are healthcare workers, and one confirmed case had an unknown cause of pneumonia.

The third group consists of 63 cases with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2 infection) and are pending further investigation.

Among the four severe cases, all of them need ventilators and are being closely monitored. In summary, 88 cases have returned home, still hospitalized (953), deaths (4), for a total of 1,045 cases. The cumulative number of patients surpassed one thousand, slightly faster than expected. But all of them can be investigated and traced to identify the source of infections. The number of close contacts continuously increases by about 20-30 people per day among close contacts of confirmed patients in the clusters of people going to boxing stadiums, entertainment spots, and clusters of people who returned from a merit-making ceremony.

The increase indicates that some at-risk people did not follow the social-distancing recommendations in their household, causing the disease transmission to mothers, fathers, husbands, wives and their children.

New patients also include the risk group who were working closely with foreigners and working in entertainment venues. In Bangkok and other provinces, about 10-20 people in this risk group have been confirmed. These numbers show that people are not well aware of how to protect themselves from the disease as they are not avoiding travel to risky areas, going to crowded places, not wearing face masks and not frequently wash their hands.

The number of patients in the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, surrounding provinces and the provinces in the southern border of Thailand has been continually reported. This is because of the rapid screening system to detect PUI. When there is a report of a suspected case, the disease control officer in the area will contact the high-risk close contacts immediately. Most of the cases only have mild symptoms leading to a high number of patients in Bangkok and southern part of Thailand. For other parts of Thailand, the number of patients is slightly increasing since people have not been refraining from traveling. In the meantime, MoPH requested all hospitals to strictly comply with the infectious disease prevention and control measures. Above all, people are recommended not to conceal their risk history to the medical officers since such actions will put medical doctors and nurses at-risk for the infection which will affect the medical treatment system. In other words, if health care providers are infected, there will be an insufficient workforce to take care of patients since they will become patients and high-risk close contacts who need to implement self quarantine.

3. Advice for the general public

The general public was asked for cooperation to be alert and to honor their social responsibility. 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 website: <https://ddc.moph.go.th/viralpneumonia/eng/index.php>, Twitter, Facebook, Line official, Tik Tok “ไทยรู้สู้โควิด” 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.