

## Taiwan confirms fifth new virus case

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Minister of Health and Welfare Chen Shih-chung, who heads the Central Epidemic Command Center, speaks at a press conference in Taipei yesterday afternoon.

**Photo: CNA**

The Central Epidemic Command Center yesterday confirmed a fifth case of 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) infection, urging people returning from China to cooperate with quarantine officers conducting health checks in airports.

The latest case involves a woman who on Monday last week took the same plane from Wuhan, China, as the first Taiwanese reported to have contracted the virus, Minister of Health and Welfare Chen Shih-chung (陳時中) said.

The new patient was one of the people being monitored for possible infection, said Chen, who also heads the command center.

The woman on Saturday exhibited symptoms, including fever and muscle pain, and was immediately placed in a negative-pressure isolation ward after confirmation of the infection, he said.

Since the center expanded the mandatory reporting requirements for severe pneumonia with novel pathogens, 119 new suspected cases were reported in Taiwan on Sunday, bringing the total to 402 suspected cases of 2019-nCoV infection.

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Among the 402, five were confirmed to have the virus, 190 were ruled out, and 207 quarantined for testing, of which 88 showed negative results for the virus in the first test.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Deputy Director-General Chuang Jen-hsiang (莊建人) said that the latest patient is a woman in her 50s who has been working in Wuhan since October last year.

While the woman took the same plane back to Taiwan as the first confirmed case, she is likely to have been infected in Wuhan, rather than by the other passenger, Chuang said.

As the woman had been on the CDC's monitoring list, she had been advised to stay home, or wear a mask if she went out, Chuang said.

She had done exercises in open, public areas before the onset of the symptoms on Saturday, and her husband is now being monitored for possible infection, he added.

Chen said the CDC's airport quarantine officers have reported that some passengers from China have responded in a "disrespectful" manner, such as intentionally coughing at or making fun of the officers, as well as making false statements in the mandatory health declaration form.

"We are warning that anyone who refuses to cooperate with our quarantine officers or is disrespectful toward them will be strictly punished according to the law," he said.

"Disease prevention is not a game, so we will impose the heaviest punishment for obstructing public officers in discharging their duties," he added.

The Criminal Code stipulates that people who employ threats or violence against a public official in the performance of their duties may face imprisonment of up to three years, the CDC said.

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Travelers who refuse to fill out or make false statements in the health declaration form may be fined up to NT\$150,000, according to the Communicable Disease Control Act (傳染病防治法), it said.

National Health Insurance Administration (NHIA) Director-General Lee Po-chang (李柏蒼) said that as the 2019-nCoV has a 14-day incubation period, the command center has asked the National Immigration Agency to give the NHIA a list of all passengers from Wuhan in the past 14 days.

The passengers' National Health Insurance (NHI) cards would show their Wuhan travel history when they seek medical attention, so doctors would be more alert to possible infection, he said, adding that the policy took effect on Sunday.

Chen said that the policy might be expanded to show not only the travel history of people returning from Wuhan, but also from China's Hubei Province or other areas where the virus has spread.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2020/01/28](#)