

Border Quarantine Measures and Achievement of COVID-19 Control in Taiwan

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Abstract

Since December 21, 2019, on-board inspection had been implemented on direct flights from Wuhan, China, marking the beginning of boarder quarantine challenges in respond to COVID-19 pandemic. In line with the development of the international epidemic, the Central Epidemic Command Center gradually expanded entry restrictions and post-entry quarantine requirements. Since March 19, 2020, all foreign nationals had been prohibited from entering Taiwan. Passengers eligible for entry were required to undergo home quarantine for 14 days. Upon arrival, passengers were required to declare their symptoms and travel history, and to receive fever screening and health assessment. Throat swab specimens were collected from those who presented symptoms at the airport or in the hospital, and then these passengers stayed in a centralized quarantine facility to wait for testing results. In addition, aiming at reducing risks originated from crowds and frequent movement, only aircrafts from five airports in China were allowed to enter Taiwan. Also, all connecting flights were suspended, and cruises and cross-strait passenger liners were banned from calling at ports of Taiwan. For front-line officers at ports of entry, health monitoring and protection guidelines were developed to protect their safety. In order to ensure safety and security of air and sea transport, the competent authorities in charge of transportation have established an epidemic prevention and management mechanism for air and sea transport respectively.

Over 184,000 home quarantine notices had been issued by border quarantine authorities. More than 80% of the inbound travelers completed the declaration via Entry Quarantine System, greatly improving timeliness and accuracy of information required for further epidemic prevention and control in community. With on-board quarantine and health surveillance system for entry, not only the first confirmed case in Taiwan, but also more than one-third of imported cases were detected through border quarantine,

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sparing more capacity for domestic response and preparedness for medical resources and medical systems and therefore alleviating pressure on epidemic prevention and control in the community. Despite continuous and serious epidemic and significant challenges ahead, Taiwan keeps on implementing various quarantine measures in accordance with the principle of “strict risk control at border “to comprehensively protect border security.

Keywords: COVID-19, Border Quarantine, Onboard Quarantine, Home Quarantine, Quarantine System for Entry