

21st May 2009, 6.00 pm

Dear All,

**Human infections of influenza A (H1N1):**

**Perspective from WHO/Lao P.D.R. (update 15)**

**NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE**

**[www.unlao.org/H1N1/influenzah1n1.asp](http://www.unlao.org/H1N1/influenzah1n1.asp)**

**Highlights:**

- Globally, there are **11,034**, confirmed human cases of influenza A (H1N1) with 85 deaths
- In the Western Pacific Region there are 280 confirmed cases from 7 countries, with cases in Japan – 259 – the largest in the region
- WHO responds to call for a move to Phase 6
- Thailand and WHO sign vaccine sublicensing agreement
- **There are no known suspected or confirmed human cases of influenza A (H1N1) in Lao PDR**

**Current level of influenza pandemic alert**

Influenza pandemic alert remains at phase 5.

For further clarification about pandemic phases please read:

[http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian\\_influenza/phase/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/phase/en/index.html)

**Global situation**

As of 06:00 GMT, 21 May 2009, 41 countries have officially reported 11,034 cases of influenza A (H1N1) infection, including 85 deaths.

Mexico has reported 3103 laboratory confirmed human cases of infection, including 68 deaths. The United States has reported 3892 laboratory confirmed human cases, including 8 deaths. Canada has reported 719 laboratory confirmed human cases, including 1 death. Costa Rica has reported 20 laboratory confirmed human cases, including 1 death. No deaths are reported in the other countries.

### **Western Pacific and Local Region:**

- The confirmed case count in the Western Pacific is 280, with no deaths. Japan has 259 cases, New Zealand 9 cases, China 8 (mainland China 8 and Hong Kong 3), The Republic of South Korea 3, Australia 3 and Malaysia 2.
- Numbers in Thailand stable at 2.
- WHO is monitoring the situation closely.

There are no confirmed human cases of influenza A (H1N1) in the Lao PDR.

### **WHO Director General's statement on possible move to Phase 6**

At a press conference on 19 May, Dr Margaret Chan, Director General of WHO, responded to queries whether WHO would move from Phase 5 to 6 in light of the increasing number of cases in Japan and elsewhere. "The definition of phase change was constructed with influenza A/H5N1 in mind, which was a very toxic virus with 50-60% mortality rate, said Dr Chan. "This new virus has a very different clinical picture. It is so far mostly mild and self limiting. Member States have asked that we reflect and consider before moving to Phase 6. Remember that Phase 6 only considers the geographic spread and does not take into account severity," the Director General told the media. The situation in Japan is a reminder that the situation is constantly evolving and WHO continues to monitor the state of affairs in Japan and elsewhere.

### **What is the WHO Lao PDR country office doing?**

WHO continues to provide technical assistance to the Governments response efforts. Ongoing support over the past week has included:

- Developing Home Treatment Guidelines
- Working with national radio programmes to develop chat show formats for eliciting trends in public opinion on and knowledge of H1N1 issues
- Consultant to assist NCLE with the testing of new laboratory test kits (RT-PCR) for H1N1
- Ongoing assistance to NCLE with routine laboratory surveillance
- Continuing to establish surveillance measures to be put in place in the event of a pandemic

### **Thailand and WHO sign vaccine sublicensing agreement**

Thailand and the World Health Organization (WHO) signed an agreement this week to further develop the country's capacity towards development of influenza vaccine production. The signing of the sub-licensing agreement will allow Thailand's Government Pharmaceutical Organization (GPO) to use seed viruses developed by the Institute for Experimental Medicine in St Petersburg, Russia, to produce live attenuated vaccines.

### **Where to get more information**

During public health emergencies, it is important to seek accurate information about the situation. For official information on this evolving situation and for technical and communication guidance for health administrators, health professionals and the general public, please click on the following links:

**WHO:** <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>  
**US CDC:** [http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/?s\\_cid=swineFlu\\_outbreak\\_internal\\_001](http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/?s_cid=swineFlu_outbreak_internal_001)  
**France:** [http://www.invs.sante.fr/derniere\\_minute/default.asp](http://www.invs.sante.fr/derniere_minute/default.asp)

### **In Lao PDR:**

#### ***For the public:***

National Emergency Infectious Diseases Coordination Office (NEIDCO)  
Hotline Telephone: 166  
UN Lao website: [www.unlao.org](http://www.unlao.org)

#### ***For technical queries:***

National Centre for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE)  
Telephone: 021 350 209

World Health Organization - Lao PDR  
Communications Officer Cathy Williams  
Email\*: [commdiseaseinfo.lao@wpro.who.int](mailto:commdiseaseinfo.lao@wpro.who.int)  
Telephone: 020 514-1105  
Office: 021 353902-4 ext 81839

#### ***For general medical queries:***

UN Dispensary Physician & Nurse

In the first instance please email:  
Ivy Caballes [ivy.caballes@undp.org](mailto:ivy.caballes@undp.org)  
Ben.Burford [ben.burford@undp.org](mailto:ben.burford@undp.org)

In the second instance please call: 021 267789 or 021 267788  
For after hours medical emergencies for UN staff **only** please call: 020 559 9292

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