

18 August 2009

**Human infections of Pandemic H1N1 2009 virus:
Perspective from WHO Lao P.D.R. (update 31)**

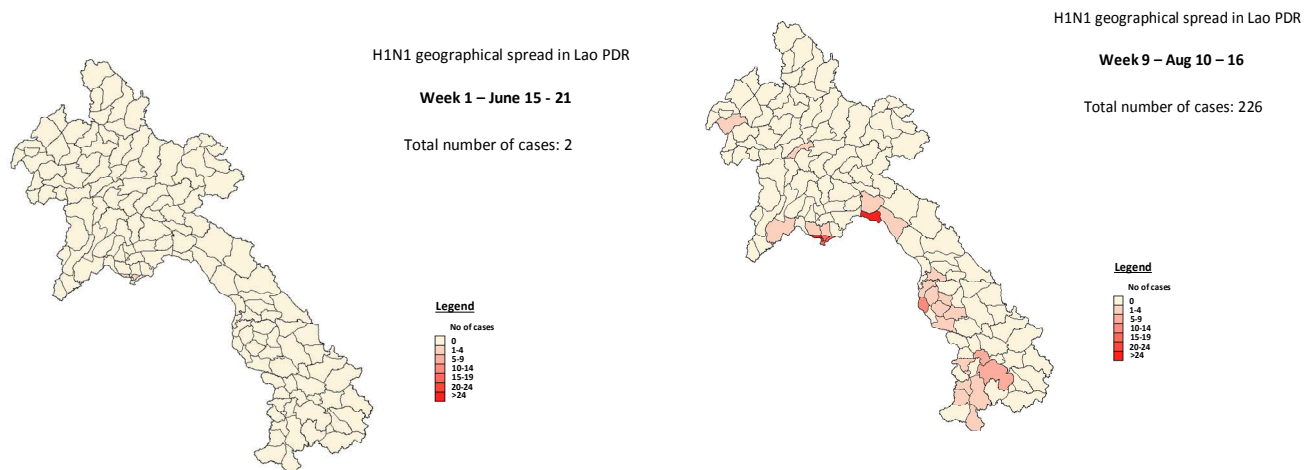
Available online at: www.unlao.org/H1N1/influenzah1n1.asp

Number of cases Pandemic H1N1 2009 in Lao PDR continues to climb

The number of WHO-confirmed cases of Pandemic H1N1 2009 rose to 226 over the past week. WHO is working closely with the National Emerging Infectious Disease Coordinating Office (NEIDCO) and the Ministry of Health to recommend actions that will help slow the spread of the virus, which is now considered common within several communities in Lao PDR. The Ministry of Health, with WHO's support, has decided that it is no longer necessary to test for and report individual cases of Pandemic H1N1 2009. Therefore, the number of cases are likely to be much higher than 226.

People who have influenza-like symptoms should avoid stay home until the symptoms pass, keeping in mind they should seek medical attention if they develop breathing difficulties or have a fever that lasts more than three days. For most of the cases in Lao PDR to date, the symptoms of the virus have been clinically mild and have not required special treatment. It is expected that this situation will continue.

Laboratory testing conducted by the National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE) confirmed that of the 226 people diagnosed in Lao PDR (current on Aug 16), 127 are from Vientiane Capital and 44 are from Bolikhamxay Province. The regional distribution of cases is shown on the map below. Among the cases, one death has occurred due to H1N1, on July 17.



As of 17 August 2009, there were 177,457 WHO-confirmed cases of Pandemic H1N1 2009 from 168 countries with 1159 deaths. However, the virus has become so widespread that countries are no longer required to test and report individual cases. The number of

cases reported therefore understates the actual number. Amongst Lao PDR's neighbours, there are currently 24 confirmed cases in Cambodia; 9159 (5 deaths) in China; 20 cases in Myanmar; 10,043 (81 deaths) in Thailand; and 1275 (2 deaths) in Viet Nam.

People should take the precautions noted below to help prevent becoming infected with Pandemic H1N1 2009.

What should I do to protect myself and my family?

- If you are ill, stay home from work or school to limit contact with others.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in a rubbish bin after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

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

France: http://www.invs.sante.fr/derniere_minute/default.asp

In Lao PDR:

For the public:

National Emerging Infectious Disease Coordinating Office (NEIDCO). Hotline phone 166, or visit the UN Lao website: www.unlao.org

For technical queries:

Contact National Centre for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE) at 021 350 209; or contact the World Health Organization—Lao PDR, Communications Officer Cathy Cochrane, email cochranec@wpro.who.int, phone 021 353902-4

For general medical queries from UN staff ONLY:

Contact the UN Dispensary, Ivy Caballes, email ivy.caballes@undp.org, office phone 021 267 789

Please note that the UN Physician, Dr. Ben Buford, will be on leave until 24 August. Dr. Cecile Hermann will substitute. UN staff may contact her through the UN Dispensary.

Embassy staff should contact their normal clinic.
