

13 May 2009

Dear Valued Clients

INFORMATION ALERT



WORLD – The information is correct as of 06:00 GMT, 12 May 2009, **30** countries have officially reported **5251** cases of influenza A (H1N1) infection.

Mexico has reported **2059** laboratory confirmed human cases of infection, including **56** deaths. The United States has reported 2600 laboratory confirmed human cases, including three deaths. Canada has reported 330 laboratory confirmed human cases, including one death. Costa Rica has reported eight laboratory confirmed human cases, including one death.

The following countries have reported laboratory confirmed cases with **NO** deaths - Argentina (1), Australia (1), Austria (1), Brazil (8), China (2, comprising 1 in China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and 1 in mainland China), Colombia (3), Denmark (1), El Salvador (4), France (13), Germany (12), Guatemala (1), Ireland (1), Israel (7), Italy (9), Japan (4), Netherlands (3), New Zealand (7), Norway (2), Panama (16), Poland (1), Portugal (1), Republic of Korea (3), Spain (95), Sweden (2), Switzerland (1) and the United Kingdom (55).



SINGAPORE – The H1N1 flu alert level in Singapore will remain at yellow even if confirmed cases surface here. This is because the fatality rate associated with the H1N1 virus is currently very low and there is a possibility it may simply become one of the normal influenza strains. The MOH also states that it is inevitable that the H1N1-2009 virus would eventually reach our shores.

Therefore preparation is of crucial importance. MOH will be replenishing its stockpile of Tamiflu, Relenza and N95 masks. A group of health experts have also been sent to the affected countries to study their experiences. It is important to ensure that our preparation plans provide a long-term sustainable operation in the event of a pandemic over a prolonged period.

Let us be prepared before H1N1 hits our shores. Included in this advisory are some general advice on what you can do to defend your workplace from the virus. The next 2 issues of the advisories would share with you tips on business continuity planning.

Should you require further information or clarifications, please contact our Corporate Services Team or Account Managers for assistance.

Warmest regards,

Dr Chng Shih Kiat
Deputy Medical Director
Raffles Medical Group

APPENDIX

Moving Forward In The Workplace

As of 11 May 2009, the Ministry of Health has officially stepped down, the DORSCON (Disease Outbreak Response System) status from orange to yellow. It does not mean that we are no longer in danger of importing the H1N1 Influenza A virus but that the risk assessment at the moment does not warrant a higher alert level.

This episode of the H1N1 Influenza virus epidemic that seemingly emerged from nowhere simply highlights the fact that the threat of an influenza pandemic is very real and not to be taken lightly. It is fortunate that the current strain of H1N1 Influenza virus mortality rate is estimated at only 5-6%.

Analysing in retrospect from the Avian Flu epidemic in 2003, had the H5N1 avian flu virus acquired the same human to human transmission capability through genetic re-assortment or mutation, then the world would have been much more badly affected as the mortality of H5N1 virus was close to 60% i.e. 6 out of 10 infected would succumb to the virus.

Remember, Practice Makes Perfect!

What can you do?

The only protection that we have against this looming threat is to continuously educate the people around us. Reinforce the important message of practicing good personal hygiene and to be socially responsible to your family and friends. Some examples include: do not spit in public places, be aware of your surroundings when coughing or sneezing, practice the right etiquette always.



What can we do at the workplace level?

This current episode serves to test and bring forth the weaknesses in the company's pandemic business continuity plan (BCP). Companies should use the lowering of the alert as an opportunity to review their pandemic business continuity plan to fine tune and improve it if necessary.

Being ready will ensure that in the event that a pandemic should strike, the company is well prepared, to weather the storm, to respond appropriately with the measures and to ensure the continuity of the business with minimal disruptions.

Most importantly, investing in some basic preparations to protect the health and safety of the employees would certainly benefit the company in any crisis. Should any pandemic strike in the future, the company would have a ready and a healthy workforce to ensure that the business goes on.

