

Influenza A (H1N1) - Update

The World Health Organisation has raised the level of influenza A (H1N1) alert from Phase 5 to Phase 6.

Phase 6 is a pandemic, according to the WHO definition, however at this time, WHO considers the overall severity of the influenza pandemic to be moderate. WHO continues to recommend no restrictions on travel and no border closures.

The virus is contagious, spreading easily from one person to another and from one country to another. As of today, nearly 30,000 confirmed cases have been reported in 74 countries. More update http://www.who.int/csr/don/2009_06_11/en/index.html

The following are some precautionary measures introduced by Ministry of Health (MoH) to prevent the entry of Influenza A(H1N1) into the country: -

1. Passengers with symptoms of flu suspected of suffering from influenza A (H1N1) with a history of travel to/from an affected country/area in the last 10 days will be examined at the entry points. They will then be sent to nearby hospital for observation and treatment as per the guideline. In addition, other passengers who travelled with the suspected case would be kept under observation and monitored in case they develop the disease.
2. For people who are travelling from affected countries/areas but are not ill MoH have guidelines for personal monitoring of their health.
3. In-case tourists or government guest is suspected of suffering from influenza A (H1N1) and needs to be kept under observation at the hospital; MoH requests the concerned Tour Company or government agency to look after the personal needs of the guests like food and other basic needs.
4. All tour operators and government agencies are requested to liaise with the Immigration Officials and Health Officials at the border crossings (Phuntsholing and other border districts) for screening of foreign guest.
5. All concerns are requested to coordinate their guests' travel plans and advice them of restrictions in place in case they travel with influenza like illness.

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For detail update on the National response to influenza A (H1N1) please find attached.

Update on the National response to influenza A(H1N1)

Date: 10th June, 2009

The Ministry of Health has activated the Pandemic preparedness Plan, developed additional strategies and started implementing activities to prevent and control the pandemic.

1. **Monitoring at entry points:** All passengers at the Paro airport are being screened. Checking of all vehicles and screening of travellers at Phuntsholing has also started. With the situation in India this is also being initiated at the other border entry points.

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Digital thermometers have been issued to the airport health team, JDWNRH, Phuntsholing and Samtse. 1 each has also been sent to Gelephu and Sadrupjonkhar. Screening forms have been developed and given to Druk air to be handed out to passengers on the flight.

2. **Supplies:** WHO has provided 13200 capsules of Tamiflu, this will be enough to treat 1320 patients, this is in addition to the stock already in the country (for treatment of approx. 750 patients). If required, WHO will provide more from the regional stockpile. Twenty one boxes of PPE have been received (each containing 20 sets of PPE). Additional PPE sets have also arrived. Laboratory supplies have also been requested.
3. **Awareness:** A meeting with all the Media was held to streamline this. A panel discussion on BBS tv was also held to raise awareness (team of Secretary, CPO, CDD and Anaesthesiologist). Radio program on BBS in all languages was also carried out. Messages for all print media and radio are being circulated.
4. **Advocacy:** Posters have been developed for travelers and also the general public. Leaflet on Influenza A(H1N1) have also been developed and distributed. Radio spots have been developed and are being used. Newspaper supplements have been developed for incorporation.
ICB has held meetings at Phuntsholing and Samtse. This will also be carried out at Gelephu and S/Jonkhar this week.
5. **Task Force:** the Task Force meets regularly (every 2-3 days) to review activities, develop guidelines, monitor the global situation, supervise checking at the airport, provide advice to district health services.
6. **Surveillance:** Weekly data on ARI are being collected and outbreaks of Acute respiratory Illnesses investigated. The PHL has also instituted weekly ILI surveillance.
7. **Training:** All district health Officers have been informed to conduct all necessary meetings, advocacy and trainings at the district level.
A group from the Task Force is also going to the VHW ToT for all DHOs in Paro this week to train them and provide guidelines.
9. **Rapid Response/Outbreak Investigation team:** has been formed in case influenza A(H1N1) reaches Bhutan.
10. **Guidelines** for health services have been developed to aid all levels of healthservices in prevention, management and treatment of influenza A(H1N1).

Challenges

Fund: Emergency funds will be required to conduct health workers training and advocacy at the district level. The program is working on the fund requirements.

Human Resources: Shortage of staff at entry points to ensure adequate checking and screening of travelers.

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