

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (87) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.19

December 31, 2014

Dear Doctor,

**Hong Kong Enters Winter Influenza Season and Change of Reporting
Criteria of Severe Paediatric Influenza-Associated Complication/Death**

We would like to inform you that the local activity of seasonal influenza has continued to increase in the past few weeks, signaling the arrival of the winter influenza season. Among respiratory specimens received by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), the percentage tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses rose from 3.46% in the week ending December 20 to 8.37% in that ending December 27, as compared to 1.76% earlier in that ending December 6. The majority of the circulating influenza viruses among positive influenza virus detections in the last two weeks were influenza A(H3N2).

In addition, the number of institutional outbreaks of influenza-like illness (ILI) increased from four (affecting 35 persons) last week to six (affecting 26 persons) in the first three days of this week. The weekly consultation rates of ILI reported by both sentinel general out-patient clinics (GOPCs) and private doctors have steadily increased in the past few weeks. In GOPCs, it rose from 3.1 ILI cases per 1 000 consultations in the week ending December 20 to 5.4 cases per 1 000 consultations in the next, as compared to 2.7 in that ending December 6.

To monitor the influenza activity and the severity of influenza infections, the CHP will collaborate with the Hospital Authority (HA) and private hospitals to reactivate the surveillance system for monitoring influenza-associated intensive care unit (ICU) admissions and deaths from January 2, 2015 onward. Doctors should report patients aged 18 years or above who required ICU admission or died AND had any positive laboratory results of influenza infection to the CHP between the period of January 2 and February 27, 2015 (i.e. a total of eight weeks).



The CHP will review the situation at the end of this period to see if this enhanced surveillance needs to be extended. We will then inform HA and private hospitals accordingly.

In addition, you are reminded to continue to report any paediatric patients who fulfill the reporting criteria for *severe paediatric influenza-associated complication/death* to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of CHP by fax (2477 2770), by phone (2477 2772), or via CENO On-line website (<http://www.chp.gov.hk/ceno>). Please note that the reporting criteria are modified to include ***all patients aged below 18 years*** with immediate effect. Previously, the age criteria included patients aged > 1 month and < 18 years. Now, patients aged < 1 month fulfilling the reporting criteria should also be reported. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the revised criteria. The reporting criteria and forms are available on the CENO On-line website.

Outbreaks of respiratory illnesses occurring in institutional settings should also be reported to CENO for prompt epidemiological investigations and implementation of control measures. Please call our Medical Control Officer (pager: 7116 3300 call 9179) during non-office hours.

Local influenza activity is expected to increase further in the coming weeks. Since vaccination remains the best protection against influenza, we would like to solicit your support to advise all persons aged 6 months or above especially the priority groups, except those with known contraindications, to receive influenza vaccination before the arrival of the peak. The latest information about influenza and severe cases is regularly published in the weekly report "*Flu Express*" on the CHP website.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your continuous support in combating infectious disease in Hong Kong.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. SK Chuang)
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health

Reporting criteria for severe paediatric influenza-associated complication/death

An individual fulfilling all the following 3 criteria should be reported to the Centre for Health Protection for further investigation:

1. **Children <18 years old on date of admission;** AND
2. with fever and respiratory symptoms; AND
3. one of the following complications:
 - severe pneumonia (requiring admission to intensive care unit or assisted ventilation); OR
 - sepsis; OR
 - shock; OR
 - encephalopathy; OR
 - myocarditis; OR
 - death.