

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (39) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.20

January 28, 2016

Dear Doctor,

Hong Kong is Entering Winter Influenza Season

We would like to inform you that the local activity of seasonal influenza has continued to increase in the past few weeks, signaling that Hong Kong is entering the winter influenza season. Among the respiratory specimens received by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), the percentage tested positive for influenza viruses rose steadily from 1.22% in the week ending December 12, 2015 to 7.29% in that ending January 23, 2016. The positive influenza virus detections in the past two weeks included A(H1N1)pdm09 (66.9%), A(H3N2) (5.4%), B (23.4%) and C (4.3%).

In the past week, the influenza-like illness (ILI) consultation rates among sentinel private doctors and General Out-patient Clinics (GOPCs) have also increased. The rate reported by sentinel private doctors rose from 55.3 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations in the previous week to 69.0 in the last week, while that reported by sentinel GOPCs increased from 4.7 to 5.8.

Besides, the admission rate with principal discharge diagnosis of influenza in public hospitals among children aged below 5 years has increased steadily from 0.14 cases per 10,000 population in the week ending December 19, 2015 to 1.07 in the last week. Among elderly aged 65 years or above, the rate has increased from steadily from 0.08 in the week ending January 2, 2016 to 0.12 in the last week. In addition, the number of outbreaks in institutions and schools rose from four in the week ending January 9, 2016 to nine in the last week. In the first four days of this week (January 24-27), nine ILI outbreaks have already been recorded.



To monitor the severity of influenza infections, the CHP will collaborate with the Hospital Authority (HA) and private hospitals to reactivate the enhanced surveillance system for monitoring influenza-associated intensive care unit (ICU) admissions and deaths since January 29, 2016. During the period between January 29 and March 25 (i.e., a total of eight weeks), **private 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 through the infection control officer, infection control nurse or designated responsible officer in the respective hospital. For patients admitted to public hospitals under HA, the CHP will collaborate with the HA Head Office to exchange the data on ICU admissions and deaths with laboratory confirmation of influenza infection. 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 private hospitals and HA accordingly.

In addition, both private and HA doctors are reminded to continue to report any paediatric patients (aged below 18 years) who fulfill the reporting criteria for *severe paediatric influenza-associated with complication/death* to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of CHP by fax (2477 2770), by phone (2477 2772), or via the CENO On-line website (https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html). Please refer to the Appendix for the reporting criteria. 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. The forms are available on the CENO On-line website.

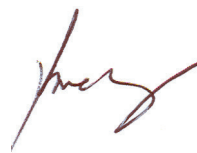
Local influenza activity is expected to increase further in the coming weeks. Since vaccination remains the best protection against influenza, we would like to solicit your support to advise all persons aged six months or above especially the priority groups, except those with known contraindications, to receive influenza vaccination as soon as possible.

The latest surveillance data on influenza and severe cases are published in the “*Flu Express*”, a weekly report available on the CHP website (http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/guideline1_year/29/134/441/304.html). Further

information on influenza can be found from the following link: http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/14843.html. Please draw the attention of the healthcare professionals and supporting staff in your institution/ working with you to the above.

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

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'SK Chuang', written in a cursive style.

(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.