

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (60) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.21

February 22, 2017

Dear Doctor,

Arrival of Winter Influenza Season in Hong Kong

We would like to inform you that the local activity of seasonal influenza has increased in the past few weeks, signaling that Hong Kong has entered the winter influenza season. Among the respiratory specimens received by the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), the percentage tested positive for influenza viruses rose from 6.20% in the first week of January to 9.12% last week. The predominating influenza viruses detected in the past four weeks were A(H3N2) (86.8%), followed by A(H1N1)pdm09 (7.1%), B (5.2%) and C (0.8%).

The number of outbreaks of influenza-like illness (ILI) in institutions and schools reported to the CHP also showed an increasing trend in recent weeks. It rose from one outbreak in the week ending February 11 to thirteen outbreaks last week. In the first three days of this week (February 19-21), eight ILI outbreaks have already been recorded.

Besides, there has been increase in the average ILI consultation rate among sentinel general practitioners, from 4.2 ILI cases per 1,000 consultations in the previous week to 5.3 last week. The rate among sentinel general out-patient clinics also increased from 48.9 to 56.0 in the same period.

To monitor the severity of influenza infection, the CHP will collaborate with the Hospital Authority (HA) and private hospitals to reactivate the enhanced surveillance system for influenza-associated intensive care unit (ICU) admissions and deaths since February 24, 2017. During the period between February 24 and March 24, 2017 (i.e. a total of four weeks), **private doctors** should report patients aged 18 years or above who required ICU admission or died AND had any positive laboratory result 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.

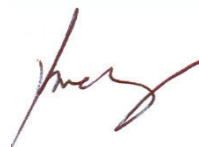
In addition, both private and HA doctors are reminded to continue to report any paediatric patients (aged below 18 years) who fulfill the reporting criteria for *severe paediatric influenza-associated with complication/death* to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of the CHP by fax (2477 2770), by phone (2477 2772), or via the CENO On-line website (https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html). Please call our Medical Control Officer (pager: 7116 3300 call 9179) when reporting cases during non-office hours.

The local influenza activity is expected to increase further in the coming weeks. Since influenza vaccination remains the best protection against influenza infection, 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 diseases in Hong Kong.

Yours faithfully,

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

(Dr. SK Chuang)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection

Department of Health