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Dear Managers / Infection Control Officers,

**Third Confirmed Case of Human Infection with
Avian Influenza A(H7N9) virus in Guangdong Province**

Further to our letter to you dated 6 December 2013, we would like to inform you that an additional confirmed human case of avian influenza A(H7N9) was reported by the Guangdong Province on 15 December, 2013. The case involves a 39-year-old man in Dongguan, Guangdong Province. He is currently in critical condition. His sample was tested positive for the avian influenza A(H7N9) virus by the relevant health authority of Guangdong Province on 15 December.

As of 15 December, a total of 141 human cases of avian influenza A(H7N9) infection have been confirmed in the Mainland across 10 provinces and 2 municipalities, including 47 deaths. The health authorities of Taiwan also reported one imported case from Jiangsu Province on 24 April. In addition, two cases of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus likely to be imported from Shenzhen of the Mainland were recorded in Hong Kong recently, making a total of 144 cases. In addition, as part of the epidemiological investigation of the confirmed case, avian influenza A (H7N9) was also detected in three environmental samples collected from two live poultry markets in Longgang of Guangdong Province as reported by the Health and Family Planning Commission of Guangdong Province on 11 December.

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) has been maintaining close liaison with the World Health Organization (WHO) and health authorities in Mainland China to obtain information and monitor the latest development of the disease. According to the risk assessment of WHO (as of 7 October), most human cases have reported contact with poultry or live animal markets. As avian influenza A(H7N9) virus causes only subclinical infections in poultry, it is possible that the virus continues to circulate among poultry in Mainland China and perhaps in neighboring countries. As such, reports of additional human cases and infections in animals would not be unexpected, especially as the Northern Hemisphere autumn approaches.



To prevent avian influenza and other respiratory illnesses, please kindly remind your clients / staff to observe strict hand hygiene, avoid touching their mouth, nose or eyes and avoid visiting wet markets with live poultry or contacting poultry especially when travelling to H7N9 virus affected areas. Wash hands frequently with

liquid soap, especially before handling food or eating, after going to toilet, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing. In addition, the following measures are also advised:

- Avoid touching poultry/birds/animals or their droppings;
- Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water immediately in case of contact with poultry/birds/animals or their droppings;
- Build up good body resistance and have a healthy lifestyle. This can be achieved through a balanced diet, regular exercise, adequate rest, reducing stress and no smoking;
- Poultry and eggs should be thoroughly cooked before eating;
- Maintain good environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded places with poor ventilation if feeling unwell; and
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, furniture, commonly shared items and floor at least daily by using appropriate disinfectant (For non-metallic surface, disinfect with 1 part of household bleach in 99 parts of water, wait until dry and then rinse with water. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol).

Clients / staff with recent history of contact with poultry or history of visiting wet markets with live poultry in avian influenza affected areas, should wear a mask and consult doctors promptly if they have respiratory symptoms, and inform the doctor of their exposure history. The affected clients / staff should avoid returning to institutions. You may wish to note that CHP has issued guidelines to residential care homes for the elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities on prevention of communicable diseases which can be accessed at http://chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_residential_care_homes_for_the_elderly.pdf and http://chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guideline_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_rchd.pdf respectively.

If you notice any increase in respiratory illnesses or absenteeism among clients or staff, please report to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770) for immediate epidemiological investigations and outbreak control.

More information on avian influenza is available at the CHP website (<http://www.chp.gov.hk>).

Yours faithfully,



(Dr. SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
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