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THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HONG KONG  
SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION  
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6 May 2013

Dear Sir / Madam,

### **Vigilance against Human Infection with Avian Influenza A (H7N9) Virus and Severe Respiratory Disease associated with Novel Coronavirus**

We would like to update you with the latest situation on avian influenza A (H7N9) and Severe Respiratory Disease associated with Novel Coronavirus.

#### **Avian influenza A(H7N9)**

As of 5 May 2013, 128 laboratory confirmed cases of human infection with influenza A (H7N9) virus has been recorded in Mainland: 46 cases (including 6 deaths) in Zhejiang Province, 33 cases (including 13 deaths) in Shanghai Municipality, 27 cases (including 6 deaths) in Jiangsu Province, 5 cases in Jiangxi Province (including 1 death), 4 cases in Henan Province, 4 cases in Anhui Province (including 1 death), 4 cases in Fujian Province, 2 cases in Hunan Province, 2 cases in Shandong Province and 1 case in Beijing Municipality. Moreover, 1 imported case from Jiangsu Province was also reported by the Centers for Disease Control of Taiwan, making a total of 129 cases.

Epidemiological and laboratory investigations have shown that contact with infected poultry or poultry contaminated environment is the likely risk factor for H7N9 infection. So far, there has been no evidence of sustained human to human transmission.

In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) of the People's of Republic of China reported that a specimen from a chicken in a live poultry market in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, was tested positive for H7N9 virus on 5 May 2013. Medical surveillance of 198 close contacts of affected poultry so far found no abnormalities. MoA has also enhanced avian influenza A (H7N9) surveillance and implemented necessary measures to prevent and control the disease.

#### **Severe Respiratory Disease associated with Novel Coronavirus**

Separately, an additional 13 confirmed cases of Severe Respiratory Disease associated with Novel Coronavirus (NCoV) were reported in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) on 2-5

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May 2013. According to the preliminary information, at least 2 newly confirmed cases are from the same family and the government of the KSA is conducting ongoing investigation into this outbreak. As of 5 May, a total of 30 confirmed cases of human infection with NCoV have been reported worldwide, including 22 from the KSA (including 13 deaths), 2 from Qatar, 2 from Jordan (including 2 deaths), 3 from the United Kingdom (including 2 deaths) and 1 death case from the United Arab Emirates. Majority of the patients were severely ill, and 18 have died since April 2012.

To date, no confirmed cases of NCoV infection and human infection with avian influenza A (H7N9) have been recorded in Hong Kong. The Centre of Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health has been maintaining close liaison with WHO and relevant health authorities and will keep a close eye on the latest development.

To prevent avian influenza/Severe Respiratory Disease associated with Novel Coronavirus or other respiratory illnesses, please be reminded to observe strict hand hygiene, avoid touching 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).

For those with recent history of travel (especially to affected areas with avian influenza/NCov cases) and have contact with poultry or history of visiting wet markets with live poultry, they should wear a mask and consult doctors promptly if they have flu-like symptoms, and inform the doctor of their exposure history. You may wish to note that CHP has issued **guideline on prevention of AI in the workplace** which can be accessed from the CHP website at [http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/healthadvice2013\\_en.pdf](http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/healthadvice2013_en.pdf).

More information on avian Influenza is available at CHP website at <http://www.chp.gov.hk>.

Please disseminate the content of this letter to your colleagues, work associates and business partners so that they would be kept informed of the situation and to adopt preventive measures.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Ching', is centered on a light gray rectangular background.

(Dr Regina CHING)  
for Director of Health