

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (26) in DH SEB CD/9/10/2/7  
來函檔號 Your Ref :  
電話 Tel. :  
傳真 Fax No. : 2712 3659

26 July 2019

Dear Doctor,

**Invitation to Join the Sentinel Surveillance System  
of the Centre for Health Protection**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health maintains a sentinel surveillance system based at private medical practitioners (PMPs)' clinics for monitoring the activities of selected infectious diseases in the community, including (i) influenza-like illness (ILI); (ii) hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD); (iii) acute diarrhoeal diseases (ADD); and (iv) acute conjunctivitis (ACJ).

Over the years, this sentinel surveillance system serves as a valuable tool for CHP to monitor the activities of the above diseases in the community, understand the local epidemiology of the diseases, detect community epidemics and issue early alerts to the public, schools/institutions and healthcare professionals. CHP has also collaborated with the participating PMPs to collect specimens and information from ILI patients during influenza seasons for estimation of the vaccine effectiveness of seasonal influenza vaccine.

To further enhance the coverage and representativeness of the sentinel surveillance system, CHP is recruiting PMPs fulfilling the following criteria to join our sentinel surveillance system:

- Provide primary medical care to the general public of all ages in the private sector; and
- See patients presenting with the following health conditions regularly: ILI, HFMD, ADD or ACJ.



There are two components for the system: (i) collection of data on consultation rates and (ii) specimen collection for laboratory testing. First, the participating PMPs voluntarily provide anonymous aggregate data of their patients to CHP on a weekly basis, including the number of patients with each of the four diseases and the total number of consultations. The data can be submitted through an online platform or by fax. CHP then collates the data, calculates the consultation rates of these conditions and publishes sentinel surveillance reports on a weekly basis.

Second, the participating PMPs can collect clinical specimens from patients with ILI, HFMD, ADD and ACJ for relevant laboratory testing at the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) of CHP. For monitoring of antimicrobial resistance, they can also collect nasal swabs, throat swabs and urine specimens for bacterial culture and antimicrobial sensitivity testing. CHP will make arrangements for our contract-out courier to collect the specimens from the clinics of the participating PMPs and deliver to PHLSB. The laboratory services under this system are provided to all participating PMPs free of charge and the test results will be faxed to their clinics when available.

You are cordially invited to join the sentinel surveillance system as our sentinel partners. Please refer to the **Annex** for detailed information of the sentinel surveillance system. If you are interested to join the system, please complete the enclosed reply slip and return it to CHP by email: [sentinel@dh.gov.hk](mailto:sentinel@dh.gov.hk) or fax (2712 3659). We will then contact you to provide details on the operation of the system.

We look forward to receiving your favorable reply. Your participation will be of utmost importance in enhancing the surveillance, prevention and control of communicable diseases in the community. Should you have any enquiries, please feel free to contact Dr Iris LEUNG at 2125 2246 and Dr Jess YIM at 2125 2242. Thank you for your support.

Yours faithfully,



(Dr Albert AU)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection  
Department of Health

## Annex

### **Recruitment of Private Medical Practitioners to Join the Sentinel Surveillance System of the Centre for Health Protection** *Information Sheet*

#### **Objective of the System**

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health maintains a sentinel surveillance system based at private medical practitioners (PMPs)' clinics for monitoring the activities of selected infectious diseases in the community including influenza-like illness (ILI), hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD), acute diarrhoeal diseases (ADD) and acute conjunctivitis (ACJ). Under this system, participating doctors can collect clinical specimens for laboratory testing at the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) of CHP, including specimens for surveillance of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

#### **Recruitment of New Sentinel Partners**

We invite interested PMPs to join the sentinel surveillance system. Any medical practitioner who is in private practice and fulfils the following criteria is welcome to join the system: -

1. Provides primary medical care to the general public of all age groups; and
2. Sees patients presenting with the following diseases regularly: ILI, HFMD, ADD or ACJ.

There are two components of the system: (a) submission of data on consultation rates; and (b) collection of specimens for testing at PHLSB.

#### **(a) *Data on consultation rates***

Case definitions of the diseases under surveillance:

- ✧ **ILI** -fever  $>38^{\circ}\text{C}$  AND cough / sore throat
- ✧ **HFMD** -fever, small discrete papulovesicular lesions in oral cavity and sparse grayish vesicles surrounded by erythematous base on hands or feet
- ✧ **ADD** -acute watery diarrhoea (passage of 3 or more loose or watery stools in 24 hours) AND non-infectious causes excluded
- ✧ **ACJ** -conjunctival inflammation of possible infective origin

The requested data include the number of patients diagnosed to have each of the four diseases listed in the above table and the total number of consultations per day. All the data to be submitted are in the form of aggregate numbers. No personal particulars of patients are required. Participating PMPs can submit the data to CHP through an online platform of the Communicable Disease Information System or by fax on a weekly basis.

***(b) Specimens collection for testing at PHLSB***

Participating PMPs are encouraged to take the following specimens\* from patients diagnosed to have the four diseases under surveillance:

- ✧ ***ILI***: throat swab for virology<sup>#</sup>
- ✧ ***HFMD***: stool specimen (preferred) or throat swab or rectal swab for virology
- ✧ ***ADD***: stool specimen for bacteriology
- ✧ ***ACJ***: eye swabs (left and right) and throat swab for bacteriology and virology respectively (one set of specimens for a single patient, i.e. left and right eye swabs and one throat swab)

<sup>#</sup>PMPs are encouraged to collect history of seasonal influenza vaccination and chronic disease status from ILI patients with swabs taken for estimation of vaccine effectiveness of seasonal influenza vaccine by CHP.

Besides, participating doctors can collect the following specimens\* from patients for bacterial culture as part of our AMR surveillance:

- ✧ *Nasal swab from patients without respiratory symptoms*
- ✧ *Throat swab from patients with fever >38°C and pharyngitis*
- ✧ *Mid-stream urine from patients with symptoms of urinary tract infection*

***\*Specimens have to be taken within three days of disease onset except nasal swabs.***

Specimen collection service is only available from Monday to Friday. **There is no limit on the number of specimens to be sent per day.** Participating doctors can call CHP's contract-out courier to collect the specimens and deliver to PHLSB for laboratory tests. Such services are free-of-charge.

## Participation and Enquiry

Interested PMPs please complete the following reply slip and return to CHP by email ([sentinel@dh.gov.hk](mailto:sentinel@dh.gov.hk)) or fax (2712 3659). You can contact Dr Iris LEUNG at 2125 2246 and Dr Jess YIM at 2125 2242 for any enquiry.

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### Reply slip

(Fax: 2712 3659, email: [sentinel@dh.gov.hk](mailto:sentinel@dh.gov.hk))

I am interested in participating in the sentinel surveillance system of CHP. My information is as follows:

Name of doctor: Dr \_\_\_\_\_

Qualifications: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Hong Kong Medical Council registration number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of practice group (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Clinic 1: Name of clinic: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. no.: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax. no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Clinic 2 (if applicable): Name of clinic: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. no.: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax. no.: \_\_\_\_\_