

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (81) in DH CDB/9/12/6 Pt. 3

January 25, 2020

Dear Doctor,

“Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance” Raised to Emergency Response Level

We would like to inform you that the Government has decided to raise the response level of the “Preparedness and Response Plan for Novel Infectious Disease of Public Health Significance” to the Emergency Level, based on the assessment that the risk of health impact caused by the novel coronavirus (nCoV) on the local population is high and imminent.

According to the National Health Commission, there were 1287 confirmed pneumonia cases of nCoV infection in Mainland China with 30 provinces/cities affected (as of 24 January). Among the cases, 237 cases were in serious condition and 41 were fatal cases. Community transmission of nCoV is occurring in Hubei. According to the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, there were 78 confirmed pneumonia cases of nCoV infection in Guangdong with 13 cities/areas affected (as of 24 January). So far, 66 cases had travel history to Hubei, 9 were household contacts of confirmed cases from Hubei, 2 had contact with friend from Hubei and the remaining case had travel history outside Guangdong.

As of 25 January 6pm, there were at least 31 cases of nCoV infection exported to other countries/areas, including Macao, Taiwan, Australia, France, Japan, Korea, Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, United States and Vietnam. As the situation evolves rapidly, it is expected that further international exportation of cases may appear in any country. Information on the number of cases reported in various countries/areas is available on the designated webpage of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP):

https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/statistics_of_the_cases_novel_coronavirus_infection_en.pdf



In Hong Kong, the CHP has enhanced surveillance since 31 December 2019. As of 25 January 6pm, five cases of nCoV infection were confirmed. The patients involved 3 males and 2 females with ages ranging from 39 – 63

years. Four of the cases were residents of Wuhan who travelled to Hong Kong while the remaining case was a local resident who had travelled to Wuhan. Contact tracing of their close contacts are ongoing. The CHP has set up a hotline (2125 1122) to answer public enquiries.

According to information from the World Health Organization (WHO), human-to-human transmission of nCoV is occurring. Amplification has occurred in one health care facility in Wuhan. Fourth-generation and second-generation cases were reported in Wuhan and outside Wuhan respectively. New epidemiological information reinforces the evidence that nCoV can be transmitted from one individual to another. Hence, it is very important to remain vigilant for suspected cases. Travel and exposure history must be elicited from patients presenting with fever or acute respiratory symptoms. In addition, you are advised to carry out temperature screening for patients/clients/visitors upon their arrival at your hospital/clinic. Those with fever and respiratory symptoms should be advised to wear a surgical mask.

Furthermore, we would like to draw your attention to the recommendations by the CHP's Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Infection Control as follows:

1. The general public is strongly advised not to visit places with community transmission of novel coronavirus.
2. The CHP should continue to uphold port health measures to detect possible imported cases into Hong Kong.
3. The general public is advised to wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask.
4. Proper infection prevention and control measures should be implemented and reinforced in all settings especially in hospitals.
5. In view of the current available information, organisers of mass gathering events with mixing of people from areas with novel coronavirus transmission are advised to take into consideration of the increased risk arising from the event.
6. Passengers who have stayed in an aircraft within two seats surrounding a confirmed case or on a train in the same row or two rows in front and behind of the case during the symptomatic phase are classified as close contacts for quarantine.
7. Close contacts should be quarantined for 14 days.

8. Confirmed cases can be released from isolation when their clinical conditions improve and afebrile, and with two clinical specimens tested negative for novel coronavirus taken at least 24 hours apart.

Please report suspected cases fulfilling the reporting criteria of “Severe Respiratory Disease associated with a Novel Infectious Agent” to the Central Notification Office (CENO) of CHP via fax (2477 2770), phone (2477 2772) or CENO On-line (https://cdis.chp.gov.hk/CDIS_CENO_ONLINE/ceno.html). The case definition is available on the above website of CENO On-line. Private doctors are reminded to call the Medical Control Officer (MCO) of the Department of Health at Pager: 7116 3300 call 9179 immediately when reporting any case. The CHP will make arrangement to transfer the patient to a public hospital by ambulance for isolation, testing and treatment.

The CHP has also updated the travel health advice. The general public is advised not to travel to Hubei where community transmission of novel coronavirus is occurring. If it is unavoidable to travel to such places, they should put on a surgical mask and continue to do so until 14 days after returning to Hong Kong. The CHP will continue to liaise with the WHO, the NHC and overseas health authorities, and closely monitor the situation for risk assessment.

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,



(Dr. SK Chuang)

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