

Thailand and the Influenza A (H1N1): Information for Visitors **(Update 1, as of 15 May 2009)**

- On 12 May 2009, Mr. Withaya Kaewparadai, Minister of Public Health of Thailand, made public statement that two laboratory-confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1) infection have been found in Thailand, and the Thai public health authority has already reported to the World Health Organization (WHO), in compliance with the WHO International Health Regulation. However, the Ministry of Public Health also confirmed that both Thai patients have been treated and have fully recovered, and that these two cases contracted the virus while traveling outside Thailand. **There is no evidence of community transmission of the virus within the Kingdom.**

-The two Thai nationals recently returned in separate trips, from Mexico in early May. Upon their arrival in Thailand, they had undergone immediate medical care under close supervision by Thai public health authority. After treatment with full dosage of anti-viral drugs, laboratory result confirms that the two patients no longer sustain the infection, there is no trace of a (H1N1), and as they are no longer infectious, they are deemed safe to return home.

-Mean while, as preventative measure, all persons who have been in close contact with the two patients have also undergone close surveillance by authorities. Until now, they have shown no signs of any symptoms.

-Thailand is fully prepared to cope with the possible situation of outbreak within the Kingdom. Intensive medical measures are being implemented, and **the situation is still under control**. Efficient surveillance and quarantine processes by Thai public health authority **ensure that the general public's welfare is not compromised, and Thailand should be considered to be safe**. However, in the light of the current circumstances, Thailand continues to actively implement policy and stringent measures to prevent and control the spread of Influenza A (H1N1)

-Thailand still welcomes all visitors. However, in the light of current circumstances, the public health authority is implementing the following measures:

- monitoring and screening of inbound international travelers
- deployment of infrared thermo-scanners at all international airports in Thailand to screen incoming travelers
- distribution of Health Beware Cards, health questionnaire, and advice on self-care to inbound international travelers, by collaboration between public health authority and international airlines,
- coordination with travel agencies, hotels and airlines in order to take care and give advice to travelers,
- other measures include intensive surveillance on travelers who just returned from epidemic areas, and measures for case detection and corrective actions.

-For your own well-being and that of the general public, visitors to Thailand are requested to cooperate with and to follow instructions of public health authority, both at the ports of entry

and within the Kingdom. Please answer the questionnaires truthfully, and report immediately to the public health authority should you have fever, or develop any symptom of influenza or respiratory infection.

- Medical service in Thailand is of international standard. Thailand also has part experiences in successfully dealing with the SARS and Avian Flu. The public health authority in Thailand thus has full confidence that, with the level of preparedness gained through our experiences, collaboration with the WHO, and cooperation from the general public, we shall be able to continue to put situation under control in Thailand.

-If you have any further questions, there are two 24-hour hotlines in service, namely, the Ministry of Public Health Hotline **02 590 1994** (for calls within Thailand) or **+662 590 1994** (for calls from abroad), and the Department of Disease Control **02 590 3333** (for calls within Thailand) or **+66 2590 3333** (for calls from abroad). You can also visit website of the Bureau of Emerging Infectious Diseases, Department of Disease Control, at <http://beid.ddc.moph.go.th/eng>.

15 May 2009

Thailand's Policy and Measures in Combating Influenza A (H1N1) **(Updated 1, as of 15 May, 2009)**

On 12 May 2009, Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva of Thailand confirmed to the press that a case of influenza A (H1N1) has been found in Kingdom. Later on the same day, Public Health Minister Withaya Kaewparadai made public statement that two laboratory-confirmed cases of Influenza A (H1N1) infection have been found in Thailand, and the Thai public health authority has already reported to the World Health Organization (WHO), in compliance with the WHO International Health Regulation. However, the Ministry of Public Health also confirmed that both Thai patients have been treated and have fully recovered, and that these two cases **contracted the virus while traveling outside Thailand. There is no evidence of community transmission of the virus within the Kingdom.**

The two Thai nationals recently returned, in separate trips, from Mexico in early May. Upon their arrival in Thailand, they had undergone immediate medical care under close supervision by Thai public health authority. After treatment with full dosage of anti-viral drugs, laboratory result confirms that the two patients no longer sustain the infection, there is no trace of A (H1N1), and as they are no longer infectious, they are deemed safe to return home. Meanwhile, as preventive measure, all persons who have been in close contact with the two patients have also undergone close surveillance by authorities. Until now, they have shown no signs of any symptoms.

Thailand is fully prepared to cope with the possible situation of outbreak within the Kingdom. Intensive medical measures are being implemented, and **the situation is still under control.** Efficient surveillance and quarantine processes by Thai public health authority ensure that the general public's welfare is not compromised, and **Thailand should be considered to be safe.** However, in the light of the current circumstances, Thailand continues to actively implement policy and stringent measures to prevent and control the spread of Influenza A (H1N1).

With experiences gained from the successful combat and containment of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) during 2003-2004 and the Avian Influenza during 2004-2005, Thailand is well prepared for this current outbreak of A (H1N1). On 29 April 2009 by the instruction of the Prime Minister, the **National Committee on the Preparedness and Response to Pandemic Influenza** has been established as a national inter-agency mechanism for policymaking and strategic determination to prevent and control the pandemic influenza under given circumstances, as well as to assist affected persons. The Ministries of Public Health, Foreign Affairs, Interior, and the Department of Livestock Development are among concerned agencies working together under the national committee. This committee also implements the **Master Operational Plan for Pandemic Influenza Preparedness B.E. 2552 (2009)** which has been put in place by the Ministry of Public Health, and adopted by the Thai Cabinet since 8 April 2009.

The Minister of Public Health has ordered that the Operation Centre for Preparedness and Response to Pandemic Influenza be set up at the Ministry of Public Health, with two 24-hour

hotlines in service, namely, the Ministry of Public Health Hotline **02 590 1994** (for calls within Thailand) or **+662 590 1994** (for calls from abroad), and the Department of Disease Control **02 590 3333** (for calls within Thailand) or **+662 590 3333** (for calls from abroad). Information can also be found in the website of the Bureau of Emerging Infectious Diseases, Department of Disease Control, at <http://beid.ddc.moph.go.th/eng>.

The Thai public health authority has also activated other preventive measures, including monitoring and screening of inbound international travelers; deployment of infrared thermo scanners at every international airport in Thailand; distribution of *Health Beware Cards* and health questionnaire to inbound international travelers, in collaboration with international airlines; and coordination with travel agencies, hotels and airlines in order to take care and give advice to travelers. On 6 May 2009, the Ministry of Public Health also held a meeting with all provincial governors to activate and reinforce implementation of provincial pandemic preparedness plan as well as to run a medical simulation exercise on the emergency situation in case of an outbreak anywhere in the Kingdom. Health officers and health volunteers all over the country have also been participating in the national effort to monitor the influenza.

At the regional and international level, Thailand has been enjoying close collaboration with the WHO and is actively working together with the WHO to combat the H1N1 outbreak. The Royal Thai Government has also donated medicines and medical supplies worth US\$20,000.- to Mexico, in the spirit of solidarity with the frontline country against the pandemic.

As the current Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Thailand offered to be a venue for ASEAN Health Ministers as well as their counterparts from the People's Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, to meet and discuss on the epidemic. The ASEAN+3 Health Minister's Special Meeting on Influenza A (H1N1) was held on 7-8 May 2009 in Bangkok, under the chairmanship of Dr. Francisco T. Duque III, Health Secretary of the Philippines, and was officially opened by the Thai Prime Minister. Among the participants were Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, ASEAN Secretary-General ; representatives from related international organizations including WHO, UN System Influenza Coordination (UNSIC) and World Bank; as well as the participation by teleconference of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC). Dr. Margaret Chan, WHO Director-General, and Mr. Jose Angel Cordova, Health Minister of Mexico, also addressed the Meeting via video messages.

The two-day meeting brought about a remarkable success as participants agreed that Influenza A (H1N1) was the threat to wellbeing of people in the region which houses more than half of global populations. The ASEAN+3 countries are committed to implementation of the national pandemic preparedness plan abided by International Health Regulation (2005). Focus will be on surveillance, effective response and risk communications for the public to reduce the spread of the disease and mitigate the adverse impact on individuals, societies, and the Region. Also, the ASEAN+3 nations look forward to sharing information, technology, resources, laboratory facilities, stockpiles of essential medicines and supplies in the region. Participants will

also make a concerted effort in bringing the outcome of this meeting to the attention of the upcoming 62nd World Health Assembly in Geneva.

Despite the outbreak and the health measures taken, Thailand still welcome international travelers. Pork products in Thailand, properly cooked or processed, are safe for human consumption, and medical service in Thailand is of international standard. The public health authority in Thailand has full confidence that, with our level of preparedness gained through past experiences, collaboration with the WHO and with other countries, and cooperation from the general public, we shall be able to continue to put situation under control in Thailand.

15 May 2009

Thailand and the Influenza A (H1N1); Information for Visitors (Update #9, as of 3 July 2009)

- As of 1 July, 2009 the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand has confirmed 5 cases of death related to influenza A (H1N1). Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva has ordered a case-by-case scientific investigation, and the Ministry of Public Health has tasked a technical team to investigate on the cases to find more information about risk factors of influenza A (H1N1). **Nevertheless, Mr. Witthaya Kaewparadai, Minister of Public Health, remained confident that Thailand's public health system could still handle the situation and contain the spread of the virus.**

- Since 12 May 2009, the Ministry of Public Health has reported the accumulated number of over 1,700 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza A (H1N1) infection in Thailand, with five fatalities. **Of these cases, most (more than 95%) have been treated, fully recovered, and discharged from hospitals.** Those still hospitalized are recovering under the care of public health authorities*. All confirmed cases have been duly reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) in accordance with the International Health Regulations(2005).

- Of those confirmed cases, some are travelers, both Thais and foreigners, who arrived in Thailand from affected areas. Others appear to be cases of transmission from close contact with those infected within Thailand. As a preventive measure, those in close contact with those known to be infected are undergoing close monitoring from the Ministry of Public Health.

- The rapid identification of patients with A (H1N1) infection in Thailand is due to the intensive surveillance system in place in Thailand as well as excellent cooperation from the public, especially those who came from affected areas. Every patient with a confirmed A (H1N1) infection had received antiviral drugs treatment within 48 hours, and almost all have recovered. **The Ministry of Public Health will continue to prioritize disease prevention within the kingdom to limit spreading of influenza A (H1N1) to as narrowest a scope as possible. The authorities will also continue to tighten surveillance measures to promptly identify patients, to provide effective medical treatment and to promote public awareness on self-prevention from infection.**

- Thailand is thus fully prepared to cope with any outbreak, should one occur, within the Kingdom, and **the situation is still under control.** Efficient surveillance and treatment processes by Thai public health authority ensure that the **general public's welfare is not compromised.**

- **Thailand recognized that the WHO continues to recommend no restrictions on travel and no border closures although it has raised the level of global influenza pandemic alert from phase 5 to 6. Hence, Thailand still welcomes all visitors.** In the light of current circumstances, however, the public health authority is implementing the following measures:

- Monitoring and screening of inbound international travelers for prompt medical services in case of need,

- Distribution of Health Beware Cards, health questionnaire, and advice on self-care to inbound international travelers, by collaboration between public health authority and international airlines,
- Coordination with travel agencies, hotels and airlines in order to take care and give advice to travelers,
- Other measures in clued surveillance on travelers who came from epidemic areas, cleansing of schools and public gathering places, and measures for case detection and disease control.

- For your own well-being and that of the general public, visitors to Thailand are requested to cooperate with and to follow instructions of the public health authority, both at the ports of entry and within the Kingdom. You are also requested to be alert and help keep influenza A (H1N1) at bay by taking care of your own personal hygiene. **Available global data at present suggests that a characteristic feature of this influenza A (H1N1) is its rapid spread. However, data also shows that the virus is of only moderate severity, similar to the seasonal flu, as most patients experience mild symptoms and the global fatality rate is lower than that of the seasonal flu.** A (H1N1) can be cured with antiviral drugs, and **almost all patients** found in Thailand have responded positively to the treatment.

- Medical services in Thailand are of international standard. Thailand also has past experiences in successfully dealing with the SARS and Avian Flu. The public health authority in Thailand thus has full confidence that, with the level of preparedness gained through our experiences, collaboration with the WHO, and cooperation from the general public, we shall be able to continue to maintain the situation under control in Thailand.

- If you have any further questions, there are three hotlines in service, namely, the Ministry of Public health 24-hour Hotline at **+66 2 590 1994**; the Department of Disease Control Hotline at **+66 2 590 3333**; and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Health Department (Disease Control Division) at **+662 245 8106**. You can also visit the website of the Bureau of Emerging Infectious Diseases, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health at <http://beid.ddc.moph.go.th/eng> and the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at <http://www.mfa.go.th/web/2933.php>

Department of Information,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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*Dairy report of cumulative totals of confirmed cases found in Thailand is updated every morning and is available (in Thai language) at the website of Bureau of Emerging Infectious Diseases, Ministry of Public Health, at http://beid.ddc.moph.go.th/th/index.php?option=com_content&rask-view&id-2110271&Itemid=242