Chicago Department of Public Health

Health Info

City of Chicago
Rahm Emanuel, Mayor

Immunization and Communicable Disease Programs

Chicago Department of Public Health
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Novel Influenza A (H7N9) Update

Date: **April 11, 2013**

To: **Infection Control Professionals**
Infectious Disease Physicians
Primary Care Providers
Emergency Room Directors
Laboratory Personnel

From: **Drs. Julie Morita and Stephanie Black**

Subject: **Links to CDC Guidance Documents for Novel Influenza A (H7N9)**

As of April 11, 2013, Chinese public health officials have reported 38 cases including 10 deaths of human infection with a novel avian influenza A (H7N9) virus from four different provinces in China. No sustained person-to-person transmission has been identified. At this time, no cases of human infection with avian influenza A (H7N9) viruses have been detected in the United States.

An investigation by Chinese authorities is ongoing. H7N9 viruses have been detected in poultry in the same area where human infections have occurred. Many of the human cases of H7N9 are reported to have had contact with poultry. Close contacts of confirmed H7N9 patients are being followed to see if any human-to-human spread of H7N9 might have occurred. However, no sustained person-to-person spread of the H7N9 virus has been found at this time. Ongoing person-to-person spread is necessary for a pandemic to occur.

This is a “novel” (non-human) virus and therefore has the potential to cause a pandemic if it were to change to become easily and sustainably spread from person-to-person. So far, this virus has not been determined to have that capability. However, influenza viruses constantly change and it’s possible that this virus could gain that ability. Whenever a new virus with pandemic potential is identified CDC takes appropriate step to allow for development of a vaccine if it were to be needed. There is no licensed H7 vaccine available at this time. Limited susceptibility testing shows that, like seasonal influenza, novel H7N9 virus is susceptible to the neuraminidase inhibitors, oseltamivir and zanamivir, but resistant to the adamantanes.

CDC has issued several guidance documents that can be found at the following sites:

1. Guidance to U.S. clinicians and public health departments on how to test for H7N9
   http://emergency.cdc.gov/HAN/han00344.asp
2. Interim guidance on case definitions for possible H7N9 cases in the United States
   http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9-case-definitions.htm
3. Interim infection control guidance for U.S. health care workers
   http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9-infection-control.htm
4. Information for travelers to China
   http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/watch/avian-flu-h7n9-china.htm