

Health **FAX**

Avian Influenza A (H7N9)

Attention: **Physicians, Emergency Departments, Nurse Practitioners, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Professionals, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Midwives, Family Health Teams, NSM LHIN, Central LHIN, County of Simcoe Paramedic Services, Medavie EMS Ontario – Muskoka, Rama Mnjikaning EMS**

Date: April 9, 2013

On March 31, 2013, the World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that individuals in China were infected by a new type of avian influenza virus identified as A (H7N9). The typical presentation has included severe pneumonia and breathing difficulties. The cases of A (H7N9) are of concern because these are the first reported cases of this avian influenza virus in humans. To date, the WHO has announced 21 confirmed cases of infection with this virus (6 deaths, 12 severe cases and 3 mild cases).

Avian influenza does not transmit easily from birds to humans and there is a low risk of human to human transmission. There have been no reports of human illness in Canada associated with the H7N9 flu virus currently causing illness in China.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is recommending that health workers manage all patients displaying **influenza-like illness (ILI) and with travel history to China in the past ten days with Routine Practices and contact, droplet and airborne precautions** as per PIDAC's Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in All Health Care Settings, which include:

- use of gloves, gowns and fit-tested, seal-checked N95 respirators and eye protection by health workers when entering the same room as, transporting or caring for the patient; and
- masking the patient with a surgical mask when outside of the negative pressure airborne isolation room.

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) is requesting that any patient presenting with ILI and travel history to China in the previous ten days be **immediately reported** to the health unit. In addition, it is requested that a **nasopharyngeal (NP) swab be collected**. Please contact SMDHU to arrange appropriate testing through the public health laboratory. According to the WHO, the virus is sensitive to both oseltamavir and zanamavir; however there are no known reports of treatment with these medications at this time. SMDHU will share case definitions, infection prevention and control, occupational health and safety, and clinical treatment recommendations as more information becomes available.

For additional information or to report suspect influenza A (H7N9) cases please contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Communicable Disease Team at (705)721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 extension 8809.