

Avian Influenza and Pandemic Planning

Update 2
6 October 2005

This issue reports progress on some of the wide range of work being undertaken as New Zealand enhances its preparedness for an influenza pandemic. We will continue to provide you with updates on the work.

International situation

- As at October 5 there have been 116 confirmed cases of H5N1 in humans, with 60 deaths, since 26 December 2003. Vietnam continues to report the highest number of cases. The cumulative number of confirmed human cases reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) since December 2003 can be found at: http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/country/cases_table_2005_09_29/en/index.html
- Infection in birds has spread west through many parts of Asia. A global update can be found at www.oie.int/download/AVIAN_INFLUENZA/A_AI-Asia.htm The identification of a cluster of new human cases in Jakarta has led to further efforts to control the disease in birds in Indonesia. Jakarta has a population of 12 million.

New Zealand situation

- All relevant agencies have been consulted in advancing further updates of Appendix III of the National Health Emergency Plan: Infectious Diseases. We are now working to a version which has been circulated to all DHB emergency planners and key government agencies. We hope to make this more widely available soon.
- Since the last update the Ministry of Health has briefed a wide range of different groups and organisations, including mayors of the major metropolitan areas, Auckland civil defence emergency planners, and communications managers for all Government agencies. In addition, many district health boards and primary care groups are also actively engaging in pandemic planning and preparedness with exercises held or planned in Auckland, Wellington, Hawke's Bay and Canterbury.

Advisory groups

- The Pandemic Influenza Technical Advisory Group (PITAG) under the chairmanship of the Ministry's Dr Andrea Forde meets on 14 October for the fourth time.
- The Pandemic Influenza Reference Committee (PIRC) met for the first time on 5 October in Wellington. PIRC will be chaired by John Ayling, formerly chief executive of HealthCare Otago and more recently Ambulance New Zealand. More than 20 groups are represented on PIRC. Agenda items included a briefing on whole of government planning, the Ministry's role, a presentation on scenarios, committee expectations, terms of reference and a committee workplan.
- Within the Intersectoral Pandemic Group (IPG) there continues to be significant progress. The Ministry of Economic Development has engaged critical infrastructure providers in pandemic planning, and has produced a comprehensive resource to help in this work. This resource will be sent to energy, transport, water and information and communications technology infrastructure groups by the end of October. Police have also issued advice to all districts on their role and responsibilities in the event of a pandemic, and the Department of Labour is developing a resource for workplaces offering practical tips on what can be done in the event of a pandemic.

What's new on the web?

The Ministry is continuing to update and add material to the pandemic influenza webpages as it becomes available. Recent additions to the website www.moh.govt.nz/pandemicinfluenza include: interim guidelines for personal protective equipment; travel advice; updated influenza factsheet; updated avian influenza case definition.

In addition, we've set up an email address you can subscribe and unsubscribe to, which will allow us to alert you to any significant pandemic influenza updates on our web pages.

For more information on how to subscribe see http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/wpg_index/About-influenza+-+pandemic+-+subscribe

Ministry of Health workstream updates

National reserve of antiviral medication

The third delivery has brought the national reserve to 670,000 treatment courses of Tamiflu antiviral medication. One further delivery will complete the national reserve, giving us 855,000 treatment courses by the end of November.

Antiviral policy development

Antiviral policy development is continuing. An interim draft document will shortly be released for feedback before wider circulation.

Border management policy development

The Ministry is working to develop the health aspects of border management policy for both aviation and maritime borders. Discussions with the border agencies include issues such as complete or partial border closures, and the quarantine of people before entry into New Zealand.

Public health services and airlines

The Ministry has written to public health services and the country's seven international airports and asked them to work together on contingency plans. All airlines which fly into New Zealand are also being contacted and reminded of their reporting obligations in respect of passengers with illnesses suggestive of infectious diseases.

Information for primary care

- The Ministry has worked with the Colleges of General Practice and Practice Nurses to produce a resource kit for primary care. These resources were sent out electronically to primary care practitioners this week. They will also be posted on our website.
- The BMJ has just published a useful CME module, [Influenza Pandemics \(Just In Time\)](#) on its [BMJlearning web pages](#).

Community-based assessment centres

The Ministry is currently reviewing international and national literature on the desirability, feasibility and structure of community-based assessment centres. Draft advice on the scope, key functions and resource implications for the establishment of such centres will be provided to the sector shortly for their input.

Post-pandemic issues

The psychosocial recovery sub-plan is being developed as part of the National Health Emergency Plan. Part of this work includes establishing a health and disability advisory committee. We'll keep you informed of progress there.

International co-ordination

Avian influenza was discussed at two international meetings. Director of Public Health Dr Mark Jacobs recently attended: an APEC meeting in Korea and the Western Pacific regional WHO meeting in Noumea. Pandemic planning national co-ordinator Steve Brazier also spoke recently to the Pacific Island Chiefs of Police conference in Suva. New Zealand's Ministry of Health is working closely with Niue, Cook Islands and Tokelau on pandemic planning.