



DATE:	1/27/2017
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Karen M. Murphy, PhD, RN, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Testing Travelers Returning from China for Avian Influenza A (H7N9) Virus Infection
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	Statewide
STREET ADDRESS:	Statewide
COUNTY:	Statewide
MUNICIPALITY:	Statewide
ZIP CODE:	Statewide

This transmission is a “Health Advisory” that provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, INFECTION CONTROL, NURSING, AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL.

EMS COUNCILS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE.

FQHCs: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE.

LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) is providing the following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), regarding testing travelers returning from China for avian influenza A (H7N9) virus infection

Since 2013, China has had annual epidemics of human infections with avian influenza A (H7N9) virus. Currently, the 5th annual epidemic is underway. From September 1, 2016-January 15, 2017, 225 human H7N9 infections were reported in mainland China, including 51 deaths, and an additional four infections were reported in Hong Kong and two in Macao among travelers returning from mainland China. This brings the total number of cases since 2013 to 1,035 with 371 deaths. Most infected people have had exposure to poultry.

At this time, no change in the epidemiologic characteristic of human H7N9 infections has been observed, including the proportion of reported cases occurring in people exposed to poultry, or the number and size of clusters of human cases identified when compared to previous annual epidemics. Prevention and control measures are being implemented in China, Hong Kong, and

Macao to reduce the risk of virus transmission. CDC is working with China CDC to provide assistance as needed and monitoring the situation closely.

January 28, 2017 is the Chinese Lunar New Year; which is typically associated with increased travel to and from China. Public health officials should consider H7N9 virus infection as a possible etiology among travelers returning from China with severe respiratory illness, especially if they have exposure to poultry. For guidance regarding conducting investigations of human infections with avian influenza A (H7N9) viruses, please see Interim Guidance on Case Definitions for Investigations of Human Infection with Avian Influenza A (H7N9) Virus in the United States (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9/case-definitions.htm>). Please also see the following webpages for more information related to CDC's recommendations for specimen collection, testing, infection control, and treatment for H7N9:

- Interim Guidance for Specimen Collection, Processing, and Testing for Patients with Suspected Infection with Novel Influenza A Viruses Associated with Severe Disease in Humans (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/h7n9/specimen-collection.htm>)
- Interim Guidance for Infection Control Within Healthcare Settings When Caring for Confirmed Cases, Probable Cases, and Cases Under Investigation for Infection with Novel Influenza A Viruses Associated with Severe Disease (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/novel-flu-infection-control.htm>)
- Interim Guidance on the Use of Antiviral Medications for Treatment of Human Infections with Novel Influenza A Viruses Associated with Severe Human Disease (<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/avianflu/novel-av-treatment-guidance.htm>)

Influenza Reporting

Influenza cases with laboratory evidence of infection (including a positive rapid antigen test) and suspected outbreaks of influenza in long-term care facilities and other group settings, are reportable in Pennsylvania. All pediatric flu-related deaths and suspected novel influenza A infections should also be reported. Reporting should be made directly to the PADOH electronic surveillance system, PA-NEDSS, or by calling your local health department or 1-877-PA-HEALTH.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.

<p>This information is current as of January 27, 2017, but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.</p>
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