

**April 3, 2013**

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**FOR INFORMATION:** Novel H7N9 avian influenza virus in eastern China

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The Epidemiology & Surveillance unit, Public Health Branch of Manitoba Health, is currently monitoring reports received from the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding human cases of infection with novel H7N9 avian influenza virus. We are sending you this update to keep you informed of the situation.

**Situation:**

- On March 31, 2013, China reported three (3) human infections due to a novel H7N9 subtype of avian influenza virus. Four (4) additional cases have since been reported. Illness onset dates span from February 19 to March 21, 2013.
- Current information suggests a direct link to poultry for three of the seven cases but epidemiologic investigations are ongoing.
- Of the seven cases, two have died and the rest are in critical condition. All seven cases have occurred in adults including five aged 25-49 years and two aged 80-90 years. Thus far, no human-to-human transmission has been identified.
- Antigenic and genome sequencing of the virus suggests it is sensitive to neuraminidase inhibitors.
- The H7N9 infections reported from China are noteworthy for their unusual severity compared to prior H7 detections in humans. There are no known cases outside of China.

**Recommendation:**

- These recent and severe human infections due to H7N9 underscore the importance of ongoing vigilance for cases of severe respiratory illness (SRI) and their management in strict respiratory isolation, including contact and droplet precautions pending diagnosis.
- Healthcare providers who suspect a novel pathogen (e.g. H7N9 or NCoV owing to links to affected areas) should consult their local public health unit and/or Medical Officer of Health and should report cases of SRI to Manitoba Health using the form at: [http://www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/surveillance/sri\\_form.pdf](http://www.manitoba.ca/health/publichealth/surveillance/sri_form.pdf).
- If a nasopharyngeal or respiratory sample from a suspected case is being sent for diagnostic testing, please clearly mark the sample packaging with "Travel history to China."

For the most up to date information, please visit the World Health Organization website at:

[http://www.who.int/csr/don/2013\\_04\\_01/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/csr/don/2013_04_01/en/index.html)

Thank you for your assistance in sharing this information,

Patricia (Trish) Caetano, PhD  
Lead Epidemiologist & Director