

ALERT: Avian Influenza

April 5, 2013



Dear Healthcare Providers,

Today, Dr. Arlene King, Chief Medical Officer of Health, advised public health units that 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). All cases developed severe pneumonia and breathing difficulties.

According to the WHO, the cases of A(H7N9) are of concern because these are the first reported cases of this avian influenza virus in humans.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the ministry) released a [Health Bulletin](#) on this issue today.

Until more information is gathered on this situation, the Chief Medical Officer of Health is recommending that health workers manage all patients displaying influenza-like illness 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
- masking the patient with a surgical mask when outside of the negative pressure airborne isolation room

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.

Additional information regarding case definition, infection prevention and control and occupational health and safety and clinical treatment recommendations will be forwarded as it becomes available.

For further information, please contact the Health Unit at 705-743-1000, ext. 139.