

Basic Response Policy (Revised)

22 May 2009

[Provisional Translation]

The government is sparing no effort in its response to the incidence of novel Influenza A (H1N1), recognising that this incidence represents a critical issue in national crisis management. At present, however, the number of infected patients is rapidly increasing in Hyogo, Osaka and other prefectures.

From now on, countermeasures within Japan need to be reinforced bearing in mind the possibility that infections may continue to increase inside the country.

Characteristics of the current novel influenza (A/H1N1) include the following and are similar to seasonal influenza:

- (1) the level of infectiousness is high, but a large majority of the people infected has recovered with only mild disorders on the other;
- (2) treatment using anti-influenza-virus medications is effective.

On the other hand, the biggest difference between seasonal influenza and the current novel influenza A (H1N1) is that, whereas in the case of the former it is mostly the elderly who develop serious illnesses, in the case of the latter, judging from trends seen overseas, it is mainly those with underlying medical conditions (diabetes, asthma etc) who develop serious illnesses, with a number of deaths being reported.

The current “Action Plan to Counter Novel Influenza” [revised most recently on 17 February 2009] and other policy papers etc of the national government were prepared with avian influenza (H5N1), which is highly virulent, in mind. However, in light of the characteristics of the current novel influenza A (H1N1), it is appropriate rather to take countermeasures consistent with the aims of: (1) preventing the spread of infections while minimising the effect on the daily lives of the public as well as on the economy; and (2) protecting those with underlying medical conditions etc.

For this, it is necessary to continue to avoid a rigid implementation of the “Action Plan” above and to respond in a flexible manner which is suited to the actual conditions found in various regions of the country based on this (Revised) Basic Response Policy.

The government shall coordinate and cooperate with local authorities, medical institutions, businesses and relevant organizations, also request cooperation from the general public, and take the following measures in the near term:

1. Collect information both domestically as well as abroad, and provide swift and accurate information to the public.

- (1) Engage in close international cooperation and strive to gather information on the responses by WHO and other countries.
- (2) Reinforce domestic surveillance, quickly grasp the state of infections in various parts of the country, and swiftly provide information to the public on the extent of geographical areas where infected persons and persons who have had close contact with infected persons have been.

2. Take the following measures in regions where infected persons and persons who have had close contact with infected persons have been, in order to prevent the spread of infections in workplaces and other places:

- (1) Undertake proactive and exhaustive epidemiological studies;
- (2) *Not* call for restraint in going outside. However, call on the public to avoid crowds so far as possible, to wash their hands, to wear masks in crowded places, always to use good etiquette when coughing; to gargle, etc;
- (3) Call on businesses and schools to consider ways to reduce opportunities for infection to employees, pupils and so on, such as by allowing staggered commuting times to work or to school as well as commuting by bicycle, etc;
- (4) *Not* make calls across the board to refrain from holding gatherings, sports events, etc. However, call on the organisers of such gatherings and events to give careful thought to the spread of infections and to reconsider the degree to which it is necessary to hold such gatherings and events, as well as to consider any possible means of reducing opportunities for infection;
- (5) The Minister for Health, Labour and Welfare shall determine separately the practical guidelines concerning requests for the temporary closure of schools, child-care facilities, etc. (Refer to “Practical Guidelines on Securing Medical Care, Quarantine Measures and Requests for the Temporary Closure of Schools, Child-care Facilities, etc”.)
- (6) *Not* call on businesses to restrict their business operations. At the same time, call on them to consider any possible means of reducing the opportunities for infection in the course of their operations.

3. The Minister for Health, Labour and Welfare shall determine separately the practical guidelines concerning the means to ensure that necessary medical care is available. (Refer to “Practical Guidelines on Securing Medical Care, Quarantine Measures and Requests for the Temporary Closure of Schools, Child-care Facilities, etc”.)

4. Request relevant business operators to supply on a smooth basis influenza antivirals, reagents for influenza detection, masks, etc to regions where infected persons or persons who have had close contact with infected persons have been etc.

5. Make it possible to maintain normal daily life in regions etc where infected persons or persons who have had close contact with infected persons have been by doing as follows:

- (1) Confirm with public utilities supplying electricity, gas, water, food and daily necessities, etc that their systems of supply are ready to meet potential changes in demand and provide them with precautionary advice on their supply systems and business continuity;
- (2) Call on businesses to be accommodating on the work of employees whose children attend schools or childcare facilities that are temporarily closed. Take measures to ensure childcare etc is available to medical personnel in the event the child-care facilities which their children go to are temporarily closed;
- (3) Offer assistance, as required, to handicapped persons and the elderly who are confined to their homes.

6. Strive to develop and manufacture rapidly a vaccine(s) for pandemic influenza (novel influenza A [H1N1])

7. Review measures at the water's edge (front-line measures), according to the characteristics of the current novel influenza A (H1N1):

- (1) The Minister for Health, Labour and Welfare shall determine separately the practical guidelines concerning quarantine measures [in the future]. (Refer to "Practical Guidelines on Securing Medical Care, Quarantine Measures and Requests for the Temporary Closure of Schools, Child-care Facilities, etc".)
- (2) Issue as appropriate infection risk information in line with the situations in foreign countries where incidence of the current novel influenza A (H1N1) has been found, and offer assistance to Japanese nationals abroad.

8. Take the following measures as necessary:

- (1) Call on consumers to act as appropriate in purchasing food and daily necessities [i.e., not to hoard];
- (2) Maintain security through law enforcement to counter crimes which take advantage of social disruption etc.

(ends)