



Novel Coronavirus 2019 Pneumonia News release

by Emergency Operation Center, Department of Disease Control

MOPH Scales up Surveillance of Novel Coronavirus 2019 during the Chinese New Year Festival

The Minister of Public Health held a video conference with hospitals across Thailand, urging them to follow the highest precautions and scale up the Novel Coronavirus 2019 (2019-nCoV) surveillance and prevention measures during the Chinese New Year Festival. The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism and Sport, notified tour agencies to closely monitor and take care of tourists who visit Thailand.

On January 22, 2020 at the Ministry of Public Health, Nonthaburi province, Thailand, Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul - Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health, and Dr. Sukhum Kanchanapimai - Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Health joined a press conference with the directors of the Provincial Public Health Offices and hospitals across Thailand regarding novel coronavirus infection.

Mr. Charnvirakul gave an interview where he stated that for the Chinese New Year Festival, he is commanding all hospitals to scale up disease surveillance and prevention to the highest standards for emerging infectious disease and announced that the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been scaled up to Level 3. This includes increasing the speed and efficiency of the screening systems in the five airports that receive direct flights from Wuhan, China and for patient surveillance in both government and private hospitals. There are rapid patient isolation and triage systems and an organized team of trained doctors, nurses and medical personnel. Within 24 hours, the diagnostic laboratory examination results for suspected patients can be known as medical care is provided in accordance to international standards. The MOPH is working closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Tourism and Sport to monitor visitors to Thailand and Thai citizens traveling abroad.

For the disease situation in Thailand, from January 3-21, 2020, among 123 flights, 19,480 passengers and aircrew members from Wuhan were screened for respiratory symptoms and febrile illness. A laboratory result identified 2019-nCoV in two cases, who were Chinese tourists. Those two cases recovered from their illnesses and returned to their homes. Two additional confirmed cases have been disclosed this week. The third is a Thai female who had a traveling history in Wuhan. She has been admitted to Nakhon Pathom hospital and is getting better. The other case is a Chinese male tourist who was detected with a high fever at the screening checkpoint at the Suvarnabhumi Airport on January 19, 2020. He is admitted at Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute. The laboratory result reveals the confirmation of the new coronavirus.



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“Please be confident in the technological capacities, clinical management personnel and public health to respond to emerging infectious diseases. There is no evidence of human to human transmission in the current situation of Thailand. The surveillance and isolation procedures have been implemented for arriving passengers, and contact tracing is being conducted among close contacts, drivers, clinicians, nurses, and hospital porters. The latest two cases will be allowed to return home when two laboratories simultaneously perform and show negative results,” stated Mr. Charnvirakul.

Mr. Charnvirakul also said that Thailand has implemented all measures in accordance with the World Health Organization standards. Thailand was praised for its efficient, transparent management. Furthermore, Thailand was lauded as a role model in providing updated information to the public, helping them prevent the spread of disease as well as reducing public panic, aligned with the Prime Minister's request. This evening, there will be an important teleconference meeting with the World Health Organization and relevant ministers of health to exchange information and discuss the possibility of tightening preventive measures.

Dr. Kanchanaphimai stated that the MoPH has implemented disease surveillance both at the public and private hospitals in accordance with the Department of Disease Control (DDC) measures (e.g. disease investigation, screening and laboratory diagnosis). Areas in Thailand with airports and popular tourist attractions were recommended to coordinate with relevant organizations to strengthen the effectiveness of rapid screening system in the five main airports, closely take care of tourists, and be able to report and respond 24 hours per day. If a suspected patient is found, it was recommended to contact with the EOCs at all levels and consult with the national office to get a final consultation before disseminating any messages to the public

People travelling to affected areas are recommended to protect themselves by avoiding eating uncooked food, avoiding visiting crowded places or markets that sell carcasses or live animals and avoiding contact with patients who have respiratory diseases. If anyone has symptoms of coughing, sneezing, panting or runny nose after arriving from an affected area, please seek medical advice at the hospital and inform the healthcare provider regarding travel history to China for further diagnosis. For further information, please call the DDC Hotline 1422.