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Licensing Office of Drug  
Dependents Treatment Centres  
24/F, Southorn Centre  
130 Hennessy Road  
Wan Chai, Hong Kong

3 January 2019

To: Specified Operators of Drug Dependent Persons Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres,

**Arrival of the 2018/19 Winter Influenza Season in Hong Kong**

I would like to enclose the letter regarding “Arrival of the 2018/19 Winter Influenza Season in Hong Kong” issued by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health on 2 January 2019 for your reference and to remind centres to heighten vigilance for protection against influenza.

To prevent outbreaks of influenza or other respiratory infections, institutions are suggested to take heed of the measures advised in the letter. If you notice an increase in fever/respiratory illnesses among your staff or residents, please report promptly to the Central Notification Office of the CHP at Tel : 2477 2772 or Fax : 2477 2770 for prompt epidemiological investigations and outbreak control. For the latest information on influenza activity, please visit CHP’s webpages below for more information:

- The influenza page ([http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view\\_content/14843.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/14843.html)); and
- The weekly Flu Express report (<http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/resources/29/304.html>).

Yours sincerely,

(Ms HAR Man-lai)

for Director of Social Welfare

Encl.

c.c. Business Director (Service Development), HKCSS  
SEO (Narcotics)2, Narcotics Division  
Consultant Community Medicine (Communicable Disease), CHP, Department  
of Health

} by fax

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (152) in DH SEB CD/8/27/1 Pt.22

January 2, 2019

Dear Manager / Infection Control Officer,

**Arrival of the 2018/19 Winter Influenza Season in Hong Kong**

I would like to update you on the latest activity of seasonal influenza in Hong Kong. The influenza surveillance data of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) showed that the local seasonal influenza activity has continued to increase in the past week and exceeded the baseline thresholds, indicating that Hong Kong has entered the 2018/19 winter influenza season. The community should heighten vigilance for protection against influenza.

The positive percentage of seasonal influenza viruses among respiratory specimens received by the CHP has increased steadily since mid-November and rose to 14 per cent last week. The circulating influenza viruses were predominantly influenza A(H1N1)pdm09.

The weekly number of institutional influenza-like illness (ILI) outbreaks reported to the CHP ranged from 8 to 17 in the past four weeks (December 2 to 29), affecting 341 persons. These outbreaks occurred in kindergartens/child care centres (30), primary schools (9), residential care homes for the elderly (6), residential care homes for the disabled (4), secondary schools (2), hospital (1) and special school (1).

We anticipated that the local seasonal influenza activity will continue to rise in the coming weeks and remain at an elevated level for some time. Members of the public should maintain good personal protection against influenza. Particularly, children, the elderly and those with underlying illnesses are urged to receive influenza vaccination as early as possible to prevent seasonal influenza as it takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop in the body after vaccination. They should promptly seek medical advice if influenza-like symptoms develop so that appropriate treatment can be initiated as early as possible to prevent potential



complications.

Young children, elderly and patients with chronic diseases are prone to influenza infection and its complications. As institutions and organisations are collective assembly places, infectious diseases such as influenza could easily spread among people through their daily contact. Sources of infection could come from staff, visitors or clients (especially those having active symptoms).

To prevent outbreaks of influenza or other respiratory infections, staff and visitors with acute febrile illness should not attend institution/organisation till 48 hours after the fever has subsided. Besides, residents with fever and respiratory symptoms should be promptly isolated. Guidelines on prevention of communicable diseases in residential care homes for elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities issued by the CHP can be accessed at the following links respectively:

[http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines\\_on\\_prevention\\_of\\_communicable\\_diseases\\_in\\_rche\\_eng.pdf](http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guidelines_on_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_in_rche_eng.pdf) and

[http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guideline\\_prevention\\_of\\_communicable\\_diseases\\_rchd.pdf](http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/guideline_prevention_of_communicable_diseases_rchd.pdf)

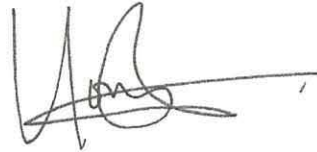
Besides receiving seasonal influenza vaccination as early as possible for personal protection, the following measures are advised to prevent influenza and respiratory tract infections:

- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70-80% alcohol-based handrub as an effective alternative;
- Cover nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly in a lidded rubbish bin;
- Put on a surgical mask when respiratory symptoms develop;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When influenza is prevalent, avoid going to crowded or poorly ventilated public places; high-risk individuals may consider putting on surgical masks in such places; and
- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

If you notice an increase in fever/respiratory illnesses among your clients or staff, please report promptly to our Central Notification Office (Tel: 2477 2772; Fax: 2477 2770) for prompt epidemiological investigations and outbreak control. For the latest information on influenza activity, please visit the CHP's pages below for more information:

- The influenza page ([http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view\\_content/14843.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/14843.html));  
and
- The weekly Flu Express report  
([http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view\\_content/2108.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/view_content/2108.html)).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Yonnie LAM', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

(Dr. Yonnie LAM)  
for Controller, Centre for Health Protection  
Department of Health