**CHIEF DIRECTORATE: EMERGENCY AND CLINICAL SERVICES SUPPORT**

REFERENCE: 19/5/3/4

ENQUIRIES: Ms C.A. Lawrence

TEL: 021-483-9964/3156/6878

**TO: Chief Directors Emergency and Clinical Services Support**

**Metro Health Services (MHS)**

**Rural Health Services (RHS)**

**General Specialist and Emergency Services**

**Strategy and Health Support**

**District Managers: Metro Health Services (MHS) Substructures**

**Rural Districts**

**Directors: Community Based Services - Environmental Health**

**Chief Executive Officers (CEOs): Central, Regional and District Hospitals**

**Managers: Private Hospitals and Private Clinics**

**Heads of Health / Executive Directors: Local Authorities/Municipalities/City of Cape Town**

**Managers: National Health Laboratory Services**

**Private Laboratories**

**Chief Director Department of Agriculture**

**Circular H……/2021**

**AVIAN INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE IN OCCUPATIONALLY EXPOSED PERSONS: SCREENING OF INDIVIDUAL FOLLOWING POSSIBLE EXPOSURE TO HIGHLY PATHOGENIC AVIAN INFLUENZA A (H5N1) IN POULTRY**

This circular is an update of Circular H144/2017, issued on the 2nd of November 2017.

1. **BACKGROUND** 
   1. Avian influenza is an infection usually of wild birds but sometimes of commercial or domestic poultry. Rarely do avian influenza strains cause disease in humans.
   2. Human infections with ‘bird flu’ are uncommon and can occur in individuals who have close contact with birds, either live or dead, that are infected with avian influenza viruses. Avian influenza viruses do not usually spread from person-to-person.
   3. Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) A (H5N1) has been identified on various poultry farms in the Western Cape Province. It is important to conduct active surveillance of individuals potentially exposed to avian influenza viruses in poultry to identify human infections.
   4. There is close collaboration between the Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and the National Institute of Communicable Diseases around surveillance for ‘bird flu’ in the animal population and amongst occupationally exposed humans.

* Symptomatic cases where possible transmission is suspected from affected birds/poultry or ostriches to humans will be investigated.
* Persons who are in contact with live or dead birds, especially those in the poultry industry are advised to wear personal protective equipment including gloves, disposable aprons/clothing and masks capable of preventing inhalation of aerosolised virus particles.
  1. Where a suspected or confirmed outbreak of avian influenza has occurred, only limited numbers of persons should be exposed, and all persons should use appropriate personal protective equipment. Hand washing with disinfectant soap after contact with birds is essential.

1. **SURVEILLANCE AND DEDICATED HEALTH FACILITIES**

* With the identification of avian influenza in wild bird species, poultry, and hobby/back-yard bird population in almost all districts in the Western Cape, it is necessary to do surveillance on symptomatic people who are working on the premises/farms.
* The Department of Agriculture are providing reports to the Provincial CDC Unit of the number of farms/premises, location and measures undertaken in response to the current avian influenza outbreak. We also request the department to provide contact details of the owners/farmers involved in order to provide information to the individuals that has been exposed.
* If suspected cases are identified in the private sector – please contact the Provincial CDC Office for guidance. Below are the positive farms linked to dedicated public health facilities

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **H5N1 Positive Farms/Premises** | **District** | **Areas** | **Dedicated Facilities** | **District Coordinators**  **(Communicable Disease Control – CDC; Environmental Health – EH))** |
| **Poultry Farms** | **Garden Route** | George  (1 farm) | Blanco Clinic, George  George Hospital | **Dr Terence Marshall**  044-803-2724 / 083-557-1527  **Ms Gerda Terblanche** 044-803-2755 / 084-581-6648  **Mr. Mlungisi Booi (EH)**  044-803-2700 / 083-210-1781 |
| **Cape Winelands** | Aan De Doorns, Worcester (1 farm) | Worcester CDC  Worcester Hospital | **Ms Surina Neethling**  023-348-8120 / 072-227-6058  **Mr. Guillaume Olivier (EH)**  023-348-8806 / 082-928-8467 |
| Between Worcester and Villiiersdorp (1 farm) | Worcester CDC  Worcester Hospital |
| Wellington (2 farm) | Windmeul Clinic  Wellington CDC  TC Newman CHC, Paarl  Paarl Hospital |
| **West Coast** | Piketberg and Koringberg (1 farm) | Koringberg Clinic  Radie Kotze Hospital  Malmesbury CHC  Swartland Hospital | **Ms Aletta Haasbroek**  022-487-9272 / 083-285-3936  **Ms Hildegard Van Rhyn**  022-487-9354 / 082-871-9709  **Mr Nico De Jongh (EH)**  022-433-8422 / 082-567-6654 |
| Hopefield (1 farm) | Hopefiled Clinic (Lalie Cleophas)  Vredenburg Hospital |
| **Overberg** | Caledon (1 farm) | Caledon Hospital  Caledon Clinic | **Ms Beatrice Groenewald**  028-214-5852 / 082-969-9297  **Ms Aletta Ludik**  028-214-5851/082-562-7191  **Mr Guillaume Olivier (EH)**  023-348-8806 / 082-928-8467 |
| Elgin, Grabouw (abattoir) | Grabouw CHC |
| **Cape Town Metro – West Coast** | Between Malmesbury and Atlantis (1 farm) | Swartland Hospital, Malmesbury  Malmesbury CHC | **Ms Aletta Haasbroek**  022-487-9292 / 083-285-3936  **Ms Hildegard Van Rhyn**  022-487-9354  **Mr Nico De Jongh (EH)**  022-433-8422 / 082-567-6654 |
| Wesfleur Hospital, Atlantis | **Prof Hassan Mohamed**  021-815-8696/ 082-334-5763  **Ms Anneline Janse Van Rensburg**  021-202-0948/082-897-2310  **Ms Kelly Morkel (EH)**  021-918-1564  **Dr. Natacha Berkowitz**  021-400-6864/083-406-6755  **Mr. Vivian Malgraff (EH)**  021-444-6643/083-365-8340 |
| **Back-yard / Hobby birds** | **West Coast – Cape Town Metro** | Between Malmesbury and Atlantis (1 premise) | Swartland Hospital, Malmesbury  Malmesbury CHC | **Ms Aletta Haasbroek**  022-487-9292 / 083-285-3936  **Ms Hildegard Van Rhyn**  022-487-9354 / 082-871-9709  **Mr Nico De Jongh (EH)**  022-433-8422 / 082-567-6654 |
| Wesfleur Hospital, Atlantis | **Prof Hassan Mohamed**  021-815-8696/ 082-334-5763  **Ms Anneline Janse Van Rensburg**  021-202-0948/082-897-2310  **Ms Kelly Morkel (EH)**  021-918-1564  **Dr. Natacha Berkowitz**  021-400-6864/083-406-6755  **Mr. Vivian Malgraff (EH)**  021-400-6864083-365-8340 |
| **West Coast** | Velddrif (1 premise) | Velddrif Clinic  Vredenburg Hospital | **Ms Aletta Haasbroek**  022-487-9292 / 083-285-3936  **Ms Hildegard Van Rhyn**  022-487-9354 / 082-87-9709  **Mr Nico De Jongh**  022-433-8422 / 082-567-6654 |
|  | **Garden Route** | Plettenberg Bay (1 premise) | Kwanokuthula CDC, Plettenberg Bay | **Dr Terence Marshall**  044-803-2724 / 083-557-1527  **Ms Gerda Terblanche** 044-803-2755 / 084-581-6648  **Mr. Mlungisi Booi (EH)**  044-803-2700 / 083-210-1781 |
| **Wild birds** | **Cape Town Metro** | Hout Bay (1 premises, wild bird sanctuary) | Du Noon CHC | **Prof Hassan Mohamed**  021-815-8696/ 082-334-5763  **Ms Anneline Janse Van Rensburg**  021-202-0948/082-897-2310  **Ms Kelly Morkel**  021-918-1564  **Dr. Natacha Berkowitz**  021-400-6864/083-406-6755  **Mr. Vivian Malgraff**  021-400-6864/083-365-8340 |
| Table View (sea bird rehabilitation Centre, 1 premise) | Du Noon CHC |
| **Cape Winelands – Cape Town Metro** | Klapmuts (1 premises) | Wellington CDC  TC Newman CHC  Paarl Hospital | **Ms Surina Neethling**  023-348-8120 / 072-227-6058  **Mr. Guillaume Olivier (EH)**  023-348-8806 / 082-928-8467 |
| Kraaifontein CHC | **Prof Hassan Mohamed**  021-815-8696/ 082-334-5763  Ms Michelle Williams  021-815-8882/083-235-1155  **Ms Kelly Morkel**  021-918-1564  **Dr. Natacha Berkowitz**  021-400-6864/083-406-6755  **Mr. Vivian Malgraff (EH)**  021-400-6864/083-365-8340 |

**NB: Some dedicated health facilities may be added, confirmed and will be communicated to the at local services and operational level.**

* The attached documents have been made available:

1. Avian Influenza Frequently Asked Questions
2. Information pamphlets (English, Afrikaans, and Xhosa), Western Cape Department of Health and NICD
   * Pamphlets need to be given to staff working with birds by the State Veterinarians and animal technicians; or Environmental Health Practitioners from the Department of Health or the municipalities - in collaboration with the specific State Vet of the region/district)
3. Job Card and Case definition: Avian Influenza A (H5N1), 4 June 2021
4. Standard Operating Procedures: How to collect nasal/oropharyngeal swabs for detection of respiratory viruses, 7 June 2021
5. 2021 HPAI A H5N1 Case Investigation Form
6. **PROCEDURE FOR SCREENING OF INDIVIDUALS FOLLOWING POSSIBLE EXPOSURE TO AVIAN INFLUENZA A(H5N1)** 
   1. **Risk of infection of HPAI A (H5N1) to exposed persons**

* Since 1997, the H5N1 virus has been described to occasionally cause infection in humans, resulting in severe respiratory disease with high mortality (60%). The virus does not infect humans easily and spread from person-to-person - appears to be unusual. The majority of people infected with avian influenza AH5N1 have been linked to direct contact with infected poultry (live or dead) or H5N1-contaminated surfaces (e.g. contaminated by secretions or faeces).
* Health care providers should be on alert for respiratory illness or conjunctivitis amongst persons who may have been exposed to infected poultry. Exposed persons include farm workers, abattoir workers, animal health personnel and any field workers in contact with poultry (chicken, ostriches etc.) from farms with suspected/ confirmed HPAI.
  1. **Case definition**

Laboratory tests for HPAI A (H5N1) should be conducted on patients who satisfy both the clinical and epidemiological criteria included in the definition of a possible case.

**Case Definition for person under investigation**

1. Any of the following symptoms: cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, difficulty breathing or conjunctivitis

**PLUS**

1. A documented history of having had exposure (direct contact or proximity of <15 metres) to potentially infected birds (alive or dead) OR having had worked in a poultry house with infected birds, in the 10 days preceding the onset of symptoms.

Persons meeting the case definition should be investigated as a matter of urgency. Report the suspected case to the Provincial Communicable Disease Control Unit (021-483-3156/9964/6878 or 072-356-5146) or the “District CDC Coordinator” (Table 1 above) and take the appropriate samples as stated below.

* 1. **Laboratory testing**
* The specific tests on patients who satisfy the case definition will be conducted at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis Virology laboratory IN Johannesburg. Specimens can be sent to the NHLS laboratories marked for “Attention of NICD/NHLS Virology”, Dr. Jinal Bhinal, 011-386-6390 (tel).
* The required specimens should be collected from persons meeting the case definition by healthcare workers at the dedicated public health facilities.
* Dedicated health facilities should consult the nearest NHLS laboratory to ensure sample collection material/equipment is available (see Standard Operating Procedures: How to collect nasal / oropharyngeal swabs for detection of respiratory viruses, 7 June 2021). Specimen collection equipment / kits have been made available and should be sent by regular, routine routes to NHLS labs, which will process further.
* Facilities in the Garden Route District should forward to the George Hospital NHLS Laboratory and they will be forwarding it to the NICD.
* If samples are collected in the private health facility, the private laboratories should forward the samples to the NICD as part of their routine transport of influenza surveillance samples e.g. viral watch etc.
* Prior arrangements will need to be made with the Provincial CDC Programme Office, district coordinator and health facility staff - If managers at poultry farms, abattoirs, and bird sanctuary or rehabilitation centres are requesting of testing of all workers (symptomatic and asymptomatic).
* **Contact details for assistance:**
  + **Specimen collection procedures and clinical advice:** Dr Sibongile Walaza- 011-386-6410, 083-657-474, [sibongilew@nicd.ac.za](mailto:sibongilew@nicd.ac.za) & Prof Cheryl Cohen – 011-386-6593, 082-803-8093, [cherylc@nicd.ac.za](mailto:cherylc@nicd.ac.za)
  + **Laboratory testing, specimen transport or collection:** Dr Jinal Bhinal, NICD, Johannesburg, – 011-386-6390
  1. **Specimens for testing** (see attached SOP for collection for nasal/oropharyngeal swabs)
* Infection prevention and control measures (gloves, well fitted surgical mask/N95 mask) should be employed by the health care worker when taking specimens.
* A nasal and oropharyngeal swab is the appropriate specimens to collect.
* A completed laboratory request form (Case Investigation Form) MUST accompany the specimen/s (attached).
  1. **Management of cases under investigation**
* Persons meeting the case definition should be investigated as a matter of urgency. The appropriate specimen must be taken, and the Provincial Communicable Disease Control Unit notified of the suspected case.
* Persons with mild upper respiratory tract illness should be counselled to return immediately if the symptoms worsen, particularly if shortness of breath develops.
* Should a suspected case present with signs and symptoms of lower respiratory tract infection (shortness of breath or dyspnoea or clinical/radiological evidence of pneumonia) requiring admission, oseltamivir must be started immediately (75mg bd po for 5 days). Investigate and treat for other common causes of lower respiratory tract infection (particularly bacterial pneumonia). Please consult the NICD hotline (082-883-9920) or one of the Infectious Disease Specialists on call at Tygerberg or Groote Schuur Hospital, or referral hospital.
* All suspected cases should be counselled regarding the importance of hand hygiene and cough etiquette.
* IPC precautions when caring for patients with suspected, probable, or confirmed infection with HPAI are the same as those practiced when caring for patients with seasonal influenza.
* When working in direct contact with patients, Standard and Droplet Precautions should be applied.

1. **CONTACT DETAILS** 
   1. **Department of Agriculture**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **NAME** | **TITLE** | **OFFICE** | **E-MAIL** | **FAX NUMBER** | **CELL NUMBER** |
| 1. | Msiza, G. Dr | Chief Director: Veterinary Services | 021-808-5002 | [ginindam@elsenburg.com](mailto:ginindam@elsenburg.com) | 021-808-7619 | 084-604-6705 |
| 2. | Mabunda, M. Dr | Director: Animal Health | 021-808-5052 | [mosesm@elsenburg.com](mailto:mosesm@elsenburg.com) | 021-808-5126 | 082-450-9436 |
| 3. | Roberts, L. Dr | State Veterinarian: Epidemiology | 021-808-5058 | [laurar@elsenburg.com](mailto:laurar@elsenburg.com) | 086-542-1101 | 072-184-8642 |
| 4. | Van Helden, L. Dr | State Veterinarian: Epidemiology | 021-808-5017 | lesleyvh@elsenburg.com | 021-808-5126 | 072-460-1984 |
| 5. | Cloete, A. Dr | State Veterinarian: Training | 021-808-5254 | anneliec@elsenburg.com | 021-808-5126 | 082-901-1710 |
| 6. | Vacant, Malan, V. Dr | State Veterinarian: George | 044-873-5527 | vivienm@elsenburg.com | 044-873-3342 | 082-228-9076 |
| 7. | Buhrmann, G. Dr | State Veterinarian: Boland | 021-808-5026 | garyb@elsenburg.com | 021-808-5125 | 083-642-0602 |
| 8. | Malan, V. Dr | State Veterinarian: Boland | 021-808-5028 | vivienm@elsenburg.com | 021-808-5125 | 082-228-9076 |
| 9. | Kloppers, C. Dr | State Veterinarian: Swellendam | 021-808-5059 | christik@elsenburg.com | 028-514-2679 | 082-641-5163 |
| 10. | Pienaar. J. Dr | State Veterinarian: Beaufort West | 023-414- 9221 | jacop@elsenburg.com | 023-414-3980 | 082-907-1140 |
| 11. | Lombard, C. Dr. | State Veterinian: Vredendal | 027-213-3106 | chanell@elsenberg.com | 027-213-3109 | 073-465-3860 |
| 12. | Swart, M. Dr | State Veterinarian: Malmesbury | 022-433-8910/15 | michaels@elsenburg.com | 022-487-1924 | 083-469-2404 |
| 13. | Fox, C. Dr | State Veterinarian: Oudtshoorn | 044-203-9445 | cathyf@elsenburg.com | 044-873-3342 | 082-699-6043 |
| 14. | Vacant, Kloppers, C. Dr, acting | State Veterinarian: Worcester | 021-808-5059 | christik@elsenburg.com |  | 083-641-5163 |
| 15. | Visser, D. Dr | Technical Manager: Animal Health | 021-808-5057 | dawidv@elsenburg.com | 021-808-5126 | 082-907-1141 |

We trust on your continued support in the control of communicable disease and surveillance in our province.

Yours sincerely.

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**DR. S. KARIEM, CHIEF OF OPERATIONS (COO)**

**DATE: ………………………………**