

Glen Abbot Ltd.

Swine Flu Briefing 33 – 13/09/2009

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Current Situation:

The Scotland has reported its first death from H1N1 of someone who did not have any known underlying health conditions. A 53-year-old man from Fife has become the first person to die from swine flu in Scotland without having an underlying medical condition.

Now that the schools have been back for a little while in Scotland there has been a slight rise in the number of GP consultations. Is this an indication that the suspected return of H1N1 has started? Well the increase went from 40.2 to 43.9 per 100,000 so it can hardly be described as significant yet.

A 16 year old girl from Shropshire has died after being misdiagnosed by the Flu Helpline.

So how well prepared are businesses?

In a national survey of businesses that looks at their preparations for a possible widespread H1N1 outbreak, Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) researchers found that only one-third believe they could sustain their business without severe operational problems if half their workforce were absent for two weeks due to H1N1 (also known as "swine flu").

Just one-fifth believe they could avoid such problems for one month with half their employees out.

Also quoted in the same survey is the following:

Just over half of businesses in the U.S. (52%) believe there will be a more widespread and more severe outbreak of novel influenza A (H1N1) in the fall. If such an outbreak does occur, 84% of firms are concerned that it will negatively affect their business.

About one in 10 businesses (12%) made changes to their employee policies after the spring outbreak of H1N1. However, few businesses that do not currently offer leave anticipate adding new leave policies in the wake of a more severe outbreak.

Who will get the vaccines?

Prioritisation of vaccine use is something we can all understand, but just who are the priority cases?

Well each country will decide of course, but as a guide here is the information issued by the Scottish Government:

Health Secretary Nicola Sturgeon announced the priority groups who will be first to receive the vaccine against H1N1.

The following groups have been prioritised and will be vaccinated in this order:

- *People aged over six months and up to 65 years in current seasonal flu vaccine clinical at-risk groups. (about 640,700 people)*
- *All pregnant women, subject to licensing considerations (about 60,000 people)*
- *Household contacts of people with compromised immune systems e.g. people in regular close contact with patients on treatment for cancer (about 53,000 people)*
- *People aged 65 and over in the current seasonal flu vaccine clinical at-risk groups (about 428,250 people). This does not include otherwise healthy over 65s, since they appear to have some natural immunity to the virus*
- *Frontline health and social care workers (approx 250,000 people) will begin to be vaccinated at the same time as the first priority group*

This means a total of 1.4 million people will be vaccinated in this first stage of the programme.

It was also made clear that:

No vaccine will be used without scientific and medical advice indicating that it is safe to do so.

China has become the first country in the world to begin vaccinations.

China's health minister. Chen Zhu said a vaccination programme would start this week, prioritising those taking part in events to celebrate National Day on the first of October.

Children will also be treated as a priority, because outbreaks of flu have accelerated since schools reopened. He also said the nation is facing a 'grim' situation trying to contain a rapid surge in swine flu.

Tamiflu Resistance

Quoted from Reuters:

Two girls given antiviral drugs in an effort to protect children at a summer camp from the new pandemic swine flu developed resistant virus, U.S. health officials reported on Thursday.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the study supports its new recommendations that flu drugs not be given to prevent infection among people who are otherwise healthy.

Both girls recovered without becoming seriously ill, but the incident shows that it is easy for the new pandemic H1N1 virus to develop resistance to flu drugs, officials said.

Checks showed they were both infected with viruses that had mutations giving them resistance to Tamiflu.

Should that be a concern? Well not according to Roche who make Tamiflu. They said on Friday there have been just 23 reported cases in which H1N1 swine flu has resisted the effects of antiviral drug Tamiflu. There have been no significant clusters of resistance, and no signs that a resistant strain is spreading in any one community.

Past Briefings

All previous briefings are available at our website:

www.glenabbot.co.uk

Training and Consultancy

We provide specific pandemic training courses both publicly and bespoke to companies. If you are interested please contact me directly or email Geoff Howard at Continuity Shop (gHoward@continuityshop.com).

We can also help organisation review or create plans so if you need any assistance please contact me via this email or Andrew Sinclair on Andrew.sinclair@glenabbot.co.uk. Our office number is 01738 580580.

Yours sincerely



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