

Glen Abbot Ltd.

Swine Flu Briefing 18 – 07/06/2009

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Current Situation:

69 countries have officially reported 22,069 cases of influenza A(H1N1) infection, including 125 deaths.

The countries with more than 50 laboratory confirmed cases are:

- Argentina 147
- Australia 876
- Canada 1795
- Chile 369
- China 89
- Costa Rica 68
- Japan 410
- Mexico 5563
- Panama 173
- Spain 218
- UK 557
- USA 11054

There have been deaths in: Canada 3, Chile 1, Costa Rica 1, Mexico 103, USA 17.

There is considerable noise going round at the moment that the WHO is likely to declare Phase 6 any day now. Will they, given there was criticism of the early declarations of other phases? I think they will. The signs match the evidence from earlier pandemics and the spread continues. Below are the exact definitions of the WHO phases.

Phase 5 is characterized by human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries in one WHO region. While most countries will not be affected at this stage, the declaration of Phase 5 is a strong signal that a pandemic is imminent and that the time to finalize the organization, communication, and implementation of the planned mitigation measures is short.

Phase 6, the pandemic phase, is characterized by community level outbreaks in at least one other country in a different WHO region in addition to the criteria defined in **Phase 5**. Designation of this phase will indicate that a global pandemic is under way.

What is the real number of cases?

The impossible question is how many people actually have H1N1? Given the mild nature of the symptoms it is very likely that cases are going unrecorded. In an interview with the BBC Professor Pennington, a bacteriologist at Aberdeen University, said because swine flu was similar to seasonal flu, there would be many more undeclared cases.

"All the experts think that the numbers we've got are a significant underestimate," he said.

"In the United States, they think for every case they know about, every confirmed case, there are 20 other cases out there in the community.

"I don't think we're anywhere near that, but I think it would be very reasonable to say we've got at least twice as many cases as we know about, and it may be more than that."

What are others doing?

I often get asked what other companies or even countries are doing about H1N1 and I try to pass on as much as I can within confidentiality rules, but I have found a survey by ORC Worldwide which might of interest.

To see the report go to:

http://www.orcworldwide.com/download/2009_Survey_on_Business_Responses_to_the_Influenza_A_H1N1_Outbreak.pdf

Some key points are:

- 84% of companies claim to have a plan in place
- 55% had implemented some form of business travel restrictions
- 37% had implemented quarantine restrictions for staff arriving from countries with confirmed cases,

Lessons learned so far

The Trust for America's Health (TFAH), the Center for Biosecurity, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) have been assessing what has been learned so far from the outbreak in the USA and the ten key things they have found are:

1. Investments in pandemic planning and stockpiling antiviral medications paid off;
2. Public health departments did not have enough resources to carry out plans;
3. Response plans must be adaptable and science-driven;
4. Providing clear, straightforward information to the public was essential for allaying fears and building trust;

5. School closings have major ramifications for students, parents and employers;
6. Sick leave and policies for limiting mass gatherings were also problematic;
7. Even with a mild outbreak, the health care delivery system was overwhelmed;
8. Communication between the public health system and health providers was not well coordinated;
9. WHO pandemic alert phases caused confusion; and
10. International coordination was more complicated than expected.

Future Briefings

Given that changes are now happening slowly I will issue briefings weekly on a Monday from now on unless there are significant changes. All 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 (goward@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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