

Pandemic Influenza H1N1: Lessons learned from the 2009 flu season

Thursday, 11 March 2010 at 02:00-04:00 Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)¹

- Canada (Ottawa): 9pm-11pm, March 10
- New Zealand: 3pm – 5pm, March 11
- People’s Republic of China (Beijing): 10am-12pm, March 11
- Singapore: 10am – 12pm, March 11
- Thailand: 9am – 11am, March 11
- USA (Seattle): 6pm - 8pm, March 10

AGENDA

00:00-02:00:

- Begin site connections two hours prior to event start time

02:00 – 02:15:

Opening ceremony and review of agenda:

- Welcome address by Dr. Ann Marie Kimball, Director of APEC EINet
- Brief opening remarks by Mr. Vincent Liu, APEC Secretariat
- Brief opening remarks by Dr. Rod Hoff, Director of REDI Centre
- Prof. Carl Osaki, facilitator, to review agenda (e.g. order of presentations by economy, explicit instructions) and clarify goal of the videoconference.

02:15 – 03:45:

- **Presentations (≤ 15 minutes) by each APEC economy**
 - Discuss case study (15 minutes) and lessons learned and strategies for the next wave following each presentation.

1. Canada

Presentation title: Pandemic Influenza H1N1 2009 - The Canadian Experience

Speaker: Dr. Ken Scott, Director of Pandemic Preparedness, Public Health Agency of Canada, and Natasha Manji, Senior Communications Advisor, Public Health Agency of Canada

2. New Zealand

Presentation title: The Pandemic in New Zealand

Speaker: Dr. Mark Jacobs, Director, Ministry of Health

3. Thailand

Presentation title: Thailand’s Pandemic Experience

Speaker: Dr. Ajchara Vararuk, Bureau of Emerging Infectious Diseases, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health

¹ All times are in Coordinated Universal Time (i.e. GMT/Zulu time).

Other Participants and Observers:

- **People's Republic of China:** Dr. Wu Jing, Director, Health Emergency and Response Office, Ministry of Health; Dr. Liu Xia, Deputy Director Bureau of Disease Control, Ministry of Health; Ms Xu Min, Section Chief Health Emergency and Response, Ministry of Health; Ms. Li Shuting, Ministry of Health
- **Singapore:** Drs. Rod Hoff and Soo Sim Lee, REDI Centre (co-host) and Ministry of Health staff
- **United States:** Dr. Patrick O'Carroll, Assistant Surgeon General, US Public Health Service; Mr. Alex Parle, APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) USA Secretariat
- **UNSIIC:** Dr. Hitoshi Murakami, Regional Coordinating Officer, United Nations System Influenza Coordination (UNSIIC) Asia-Pacific Regional Hub
- **WHO (TBC):** Dr. Augusto Pinto, communicable diseases focal point in SEARO office

Closing Remarks:

03:45 – 04:00: Mr. Vincent Liu to provide brief closing remarks. Drs. Ann Marie Kimball and Rod Hoff to briefly comment on merits and challenges identified in this session. Brief announcement on the next steps.

*****Questions to Consider for Discussion*****

1) Was there communication and shared-border preparedness between neighboring economies?

- * If so, what were some of the merits—and drawbacks--of such preparedness?

2) Did you experience a problem with H1N1 vaccine?

- * Access problems to the vaccine (e.g. US, Canada)?
- * Unused supply of vaccine? If so, what did you do with the extra vaccines?
- * While the vaccine was developed during the pandemic, it did not alter the epidemic curve (at least for the current wave). How should we improve vaccine production/distribution for the next pandemic for a more effective response?
- * Have there been efforts to measure herd immunity/seroprevalence from H1N1 vaccine or from infection?

3) Were there closings of schools and limitations of mass gatherings?

- * If so, when? What were the criteria for deciding to do so?
- * What effect did these policies have on business and communication?
- * How effective were these policies?
- * Did citizens follow the recommendations?
- * Are containment and mitigation realistically feasible in today's globalized world?

4) What policies were implemented regarding personal protection and responsibility through education, public information, and instructions to hospital staff?

- * Was the use of a face mask recommended?
- * Was there a campaign for improved hygiene?
- * Were any of these efforts shown to be effective?

5) How were antivirals utilized?

- * Were there challenges or success regarding supplies and distribution?
- * What were the criteria for receiving them?
- * Were they used primarily for medical treatment of individual patients or epidemiologically, in an attempt to combat the outbreak?

6) Did you experience a surge of influenza-like illness cases at hospitals?

- * Was your economy adequately prepared?
- * Are there lessons learned that you could share with other economies?

7) Were you prepared for this low or moderate mortality scenario?

* To date, pandemic H1N1 has turned out to be mild. While it is wise to prepare for the worst, why did we not consider a mild pandemic in our planning and exercises? This could have brought up important issues in vaccine surplus, loss of public interest, etc. (e.g. in a tabletop). How do you maintain public vigilance in a mild pandemic situation?

8) How do we use the lessons from pandemic H1N1 for seasonal flu?

* While pandemic flu gains close attention from both the public and scientists, seasonal flu kills up to a half a million a year globally. Were there any important lessons from the H1N1 experience that can be translated to seasonal flu preparedness?