

Avian Influenza Contingency Plan

As of August 2006

IES has developed a contingency plan for possible scenarios related to avian influenza. The following are worldwide guidelines for IES Center action plans.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Immediate preventative measures Center staff have undertaken or are undertaking:

- **Share Travel Advisories.** Email students to inform them of World Health Organization (WHO) advisories related to travel in regions with reported cases of avian influenza (H5N1 virus). At present, the WHO does not advise against travel, but does warn travellers to avoid contact with live animal markets and poultry farms, as well as free-ranging or caged poultry. The WHO also advises to avoid dead migratory fowl or wild fowl showing signs of disease. Fowl-to-human cases of H5N1 have been reported in Indonesia, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Thailand, China, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Turkey, and Egypt. Students in IES Asia programs have been known to travel to Viet Nam and Thailand, and these IES Centers have particularly emphasized this warning from the WHO.
- **Share Safety Bulletins.** Provide bulletins to students on the most recent WHO, Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and U.S. State Department warnings on all safety matters, including special attention to avian influenza. The WHO maintains the following website on avian influenza at www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/. IES Centers in Europe should also inform students of the European Influenza Surveillance Scheme's site at www.eiss.org, and Centers in Asia of APEC's EINet site at <http://depts.washington.edu/einet/>.
- **Join Mailing Lists.** Join mailing lists for local, regional, and/or national health authorities, in addition to U.S. State Department advisory mailing lists, to ensure receipt of all country-specific communication regarding avian influenza. Share important announcements with the IES Crisis Management Team and students, as needed.
- **Symptom Awareness.** Educate students about the symptoms of avian influenza infection in humans: respiratory infection, fever, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, shivering, weakness, and eye infections (conjunctivitis).
- **Encourage Health and Hygiene.** Encourage students and staff to employ recommended hygiene practices, such as washing hands frequently with soap and water or using appropriate alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Encourage students and staff to maintain general good health through proper nutrition, exercise, and rest.
- **Continue Crisis Drills.** Reemphasize the importance of crisis drills to ensure student response in the event of an actual emergency and strictly enforce the mandatory cell phone policy.
- **Purchase Masks.** Acquire supplies of NIOSH-approved N-95 masks for students and staff.
- **Acquire Safety Supplies.** Acquire the following supplies for IES Center offices: 60%+ alcohol-based hand sanitizer, bleach- or ammonia-based disinfectants, and latex gloves.

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PREVENTATIVE MEASURES IMPLEMENTED IN THE EVENT OF AN OUTBREAK

In the event of an outbreak of H5N1 in fowl in a country where IES has a program, the immediate risk involved will be that of viral infection being passed from fowl to humans, and IES Centers would institute the following measures:

- **Evaluate/Mitigate Travel Risk.** Institute program changes to be certain that students and staff avoid direct contact with fowl. For example, field trips where students come in contact with poultry should not be run, i.e., *Being Irish for a Day* farmhouse visit. Further, judging by government responses during previous food/wildlife epidemics such as mad cow and hoof-and-mouth, it is likely that many large congregations, school field trips, etc. will be discouraged and/or cancelled. This may mean the cancelling of pre-planned field trips regardless of destination. The IES Crisis Management Team will assess and develop policies as needed to address possible refunds based on the specifics of cases as they arise.
- **Caution Against Independent Travel.** Advise students against independent travel, especially to affected areas, especially as the EU or individual nations in Europe or Asia may decide to limit international travel. Again IES, through the Crisis Management Team, will develop policies as these cases arise.
- **Assess Medical Treatment Availability.** Contact local medical treatment facilities to request their pandemic plans to learn how access to the facilities might be affected in the event of a full-fledged pandemic.
- **Determine Availability of Anti-Virals.** Investigate anti-viral access for non-citizens at each program location. Global stockpiles of anti-virals are building, but, at this time, are very limited. Learn what criteria are used in determining who has access to anti-virals and inform the Crisis Management Team and students. Further, vaccines against a pandemic virus are not yet available. Should this change, the amount of vaccines expected to be available would still be very small and limited to those at greatest risk. Center staff will investigate vaccine availability by location as well, when available.
- **Continuation of Education.** Develop alternative measures to ensure continuity of instruction (e.g., web-based instruction, telephone trees, e-mailed lessons and assignments, instruction via local radio or television, etc.) in the event of partner institution closures.
- **Stockpile Items.** Commence preparations for the possibility of avian influenza evolving to include human-to-human transmission, including stockpiling additional masks as well as water and non-perishable food items.
- **Evaluate Emergency Needs of IES Staff.** Submit an annual emergency plan that includes assessment of staff needs in a serious emergency such as pandemic influenza. Should emergency planning for a pandemic reach this stage, Centers should assess staff members' personal emergency needs and contingencies to ensure continuation of coverage.

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PREPARATIONS FOR A PANDEMIC

If the H5N1 virus mutates and develops into a form that is passed easily from human to human, this would trigger serious preparations for a pandemic. IES Center staff would:

- **Maintain Awareness.** Run an awareness campaign amongst staff, students, and faculty, via email, IES Center notice boards, and phone contact/text messaging to keep everyone up-to-date on the latest developments.
- **Prepare 'Emergency Packs'.** Emergency packs (containing food, water, masks, torches in case of power failure, battery operated radio to keep up-to-date with world events in case of power failure) should be available if an evacuation from the region or quarantine be possible.
- **Facilitate Access to Health Care.** Connect students, especially those who are at high risk (e.g., asthmatics), to health care professionals who can advise the best course of action for protecting them from infection. If evacuation or quarantine is recommended, IES Centers should assist their students as directed by health care professionals.
- **Liberalize Leave Policies.** Institute liberal leave policies to avoid penalizing students or staff from absences during quarantine periods suggested or mandated by local, regional, or national health authorities. If classes need to be cancelled, put into action distance learning options created in previous planning stages to ensure continuation of instruction.
- **Plan for Evacuation.** Adapt existing evacuation plans in consultation with advisories of the U.S. State Department, the WHO, the CDC, and/or local/regional/national public health authorities in the affected country.
- **Prepare for Student Accommodation.** Make plans to cater to students beyond the end of a term should governments, in efforts to contain the spread of disease, decide to restrict international flights. This would involve:
 - Extending housing contracts, where possible
 - Finding alternative housing, where extension of housing contracts is not possible
 - Continuing with IES courses or otherwise providing some sort of activity/focal point to fill students' time.

These questions will be decided with the input of the IES Center Director, IES Program Dean, and the IES Crisis Management Team.

READING MATERIALS

- The World Health Organisation has a very informative article on avian influenza at: www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/avian_faqs/en/index.html
- U.S. embassy site: http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/bird_flu.html
- The U.S. government's official site: www.avianflu.gov
- The European Influenza Surveillance Scheme: www.eiss.org
- APEC's EINet: <http://depts.washington.edu/einet/>
- Masks: www.n-95mask.com; www.pandemic.info/