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MEMORANDUM

TO: Local Health Departments, Hospital Infection Preventionists, Infectious Disease Physicians, and Hospital Administrators

FROM: Communicable Disease Control Section

DATE: January 27, 2017

RE: Testing travelers from China for H7N9 Influenza

China has experienced annual epidemics of human infections with avian influenza A (H7N9) virus since 2013. From September 1, 2016 to January 15, 2017, 225 human H7N9 infections were reported in mainland China, including 51 deaths, and an additional four infections were reported in Hong Kong and 2 in Macao among travelers returning from mainland China. This brings the total number of cases since 2013 to 1,035 with 371 deaths. Most infected people have had exposure to poultry. Prevention and control measures are being implemented in China, Hong Kong, and Macao. However, January 28, 2017 is the Chinese Lunar New Year, which is typically associated with increased travel to and from China. Public health officials and health-care providers should consider H7N9 virus infection as a possible etiology among travelers returning from China with severe respiratory illness, especially if they have had exposure to poultry.

Please promptly report any respiratory illnesses in persons returning from China to your local health department or IDPH. Specimen collection and shipment to the state public health laboratory can be arranged to help identify H7N9, or other novel influenza infections. Please utilize the [influenza test requisition form](#) on the IDPH website when submitting specimens.

For additional guidance regarding conducting investigations of human infections with avian influenza A (H7N9) viruses, please see [Interim Guidance on Case Definitions for Investigations of Human Infection with Avian Influenza A \(H7N9\) Virus in the United States](#). The following webpages also provide information related to CDC's recommendations for specimen collection, testing, infection control and treatment for H7N9:

- [Interim Guidance for Specimen Collection, Processing, and Testing for Patients with Suspected Infection with Novel Influenza A Viruses Associated with Severe Disease in Humans](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Infection Control Within Healthcare Settings When Caring for Confirmed Cases, Probable Cases, and Cases Under Investigation for Infection with Novel Influenza A Viruses Associated with Severe Disease](#)
- [Interim Guidance on the Use of Antiviral Medications for Treatment of Human Infections with Novel Influenza A Viruses Associated with Severe Human Disease](#)

If you have questions, please contact the Communicable Disease Control Section at 217-782-2016.