



January 26, 1998

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

DECS MEMORANDUM
No. 29, s. 1998

UPDATE ON INFLUENZA H5NI VIRUS IN HONGKONG

To: Undersecretaries
Assistant Secretaries
Bureau/Cultural Agency Directors
Regional Directors
Schools Superintendents
Directors of Services/Centers and Heads of Units
All Other Officials Concerned

1. The Department of Health has released the following updates on Influenza H5NI in Hongkong:
 - a. As of January 4, there were 15 confirmed cases of Influenza H5NI disease or "bird flu" in Hongkong, four of whom died. Five other suspect cases are being investigated.
 - b. Preliminary blood tests of 502 persons in the area where the first human case occurred revealed only nine (2%) positive for antibody to the virus, all of whom were asymptomatic. These results coupled with the fact that only 15 confirmed cases have been documented despite intensive surveillance among Hongkong's 6.5 million people suggests that the virus is not easily transmitted.
 - c. To date, there has been no documented human to human transmission of the virus. The main mode of transmission is from infected birds to humans.
 - d. The Philippines does not import chickens from Hongkong. The Department of Agriculture is monitoring conditions in poultry farms in the country.
 - e. Measures have been taken by local agriculture and health offices to decrease the chances of the virus entering the Philippines.
2. All school officials specifically the school health and nutrition personnel are encouraged to widely disseminate the information to enhance awareness of the situation.
3. Cooperation of all concerned is desired.


RICARDO T. GLORIA
Secretary

Reference:

None

Allotment: 1--(D.O. 50-97)

To be indicated in the Perpetual Index
under the following subjects:

HEALTH EDUCATION
OFFICIALS