

## **[ DOLE DEPARTMENT ADVISORY NO. 04, May 14, 2009 ]**

### **GUIDELINES ON INFLUENZA A (H1N1) PREVENTION AND CONTROL AT THE WORKPLACE**

In view of the overall efforts to prevent the transmission or spread of Influenza A (H1N1) at the workplace, the following Guidelines pursuant to Department Order No. 47-03 are hereby adopted.

#### **I. COVERAGE**

These Guidelines shall apply to all employers and workers in the private sector.

#### **II. WORKPLACE HEALTH**

As a precautionary measure at the workplace, all employers are enjoined to:

1. Regularly provide information about Influenza A (H1N1) including its transmission, disease outcome, and treatment options to their workers;
2. Regularly clean the work areas with household disinfectant and make sure that water, soap and disinfectants are available in all washrooms and toilets;
3. Stress to all workers the EVERYDAY ACTIONS TO STAY HEALTHY AND KEEP A HEALTHY WORKPLACE, such as:
  - To cover the nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing;
  - Frequent washing of hands with soap and water or cleansing of hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizers;
  - Spitting at proper places;
  - To avoid close contact with sick people;
  - To increase the body's resistance by having adequate rest and at least 8 hours of sleep;
  - Drinking plenty of fluids; and
  - Eating nutritious food
4. Monitor the health of workers particularly those with fever and those who have traveled to countries affected with the Influenza A (H1N1) virus.

#### **Workplace with Imminent Danger Situation**

In workplaces where workers are evidently at risk of infection as in health care services and other frontline services, the employer shall take immediate protective measures to avoid, correct or remove such imminent danger (based on Rule 1010, OSHS). A screening program on Influenza A (H1N1) must be installed in accordance

with the guidelines issued by the Department of Health (DOH). Screening or triage shall follow a procedure using a checklist that may include questions related to:

1. Recent travel to a country or place on WHO list with transmission of Influenza A (H1N1) virus;
2. Recent contact with a confirmed or suspected Influenza A (H1N1) case; and
3. Affliction by such symptoms as fever >38 degrees Celsius and flu-like symptoms such as cough, difficulty of breathing or shortness of breath; vomiting or nausea; and diarrhea

Workers in said workplace must take extra precautionary measures which includes strict hygiene and the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs). Employers shall see to it that these PPEs (e.g. appropriate respirators such as N95, gowns, gloves) are properly worn by the workers while at work and disposed of accordingly after use.

### **Guidance to Employers for Care of Workers with Fever or Who Are Ill:**

A. In the event that a worker is SUSPECTED as having Influenza A (H1N1), the employer shall:

1. Provide the worker with a face mask to prevent the risk of spreading the infection;
2. Immediately isolate the worker in a separate well-ventilated room in the workplace, away from other workers;
3. Refer the worker to the company healthcare provider or to the nearest available healthcare provider for evaluation if the history, signs and symptoms are consistent with a suspected case of Influenza A (H1N1);
4. Through the healthcare provider, report the worker suspected to have Influenza A (H1N1) to the Department of Health by calling the DOH Hotline on Influenza A (H1N1) at telephone numbers: 7111001/7111002;
5. Ensure the implementation of recommendations provided by the DOH Response Team on the management and transport of suspected case of Influenza A (H1N1); and
6. Decontaminate the work area with appropriate disinfectant (e.g. chlorine bleaching solution and 1:100 phenol based disinfectant)

B. In the event that a worker is ill or has fever but is NOT suspected to have Influenza A (H1N1), the employer must advise the worker to take prudent measures to limit the spread of communicable diseases, including influenza, which are as follows:

1. Stay at home and keep away from work or crowds;
2. Take adequate rest and take plenty of fluids;