



PRESS STATEMENT

H1N1 IN THE POST-PANDEMIC PERIOD

Following the 9th Emergency Committee Meeting, the Director-General of WHO, Dr Margaret Chan, has issued an official statement on 10 Aug 2010 that the world is no longer in Phase 6 of the Influenza Pandemic Alert and we are now moving into the post-pandemic period.

This means that we are moving into a situation where:

- The H1N1 virus has spread to all countries,
- Many people in all age groups have developed some immunity to the virus,
- No large and unusual summer outbreaks have occurred in either the Northern or Southern Hemispheres, and
- Seasonal influenza A (H3N2) and influenza B viruses are now being reported in many countries.

Based on this overall picture, the WHO felt that the evidence is strong that the recent influenza pandemic patterns are transitioning towards seasonal patterns of influenza. However, the H1N1 (2009) virus is expected to continue to circulate as a seasonal influenza strain for many years.

Hence, regardless of whether the world is in a pandemic situation or not, **individuals** are advised to continue to take prudent steps to reduce their risk of infection. Such steps include:

- Vaccination against influenza, especially for those recognized to be at higher risk for severe illness, including young children, pregnant women and those with respiratory or chronic health conditions. **WHO continues to recommend vaccination against the virus as the best protection.** The trivalent seasonal influenza vaccine which includes the H1N1 strain will provide the broadest protection. This trivalent vaccine is already available in the Malaysian market and can be given to people above 6 months of age. The Ministry of Health will ensure

adequate supply of this vaccine in the market and check against any excessive profiteering in its provision.

- Continuing to practice hand and respiratory hygiene.

Our **Health Authorities** will:

- Continue routine respiratory disease surveillance and reporting, as well as monitoring and investigating unusual disease patterns.
- Monitor the H1N1 (2009) virus for important genetic, antigenic or functional changes such as anti-viral drug sensitivity.
- Notify WHO of any sustained transmission of anti-viral resistant H1N1 or any notable changes in the severity, epidemiological and clinical characteristics of H1N1 infection.
- Continue prevention and control efforts, including vaccination against influenza.

Clinical management:

- Our doctors have been advised to continue following WHO's guidelines for clinical management.
- Early recognition and appropriate treatment remain important.
- Patients who have severe or deteriorating influenza, and those who are at higher risk of severe or complicated influenza, should be treated with oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) as soon as possible.

Minister of Health's Office

11 August 2010