



MC No. 23 s. 2009

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR

TO : ALL HEADS OF CONSTITUTIONAL BODIES; DEPARTMENTS;
BUREAUS AND AGENCIES OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT;
LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS; GOVERNMENT-OWNED AND
CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS WITH ORIGINAL CHARTER;
AND STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

SUBJECT : Interim Guidelines on the Use of Leave Credits for Absence
Due to Self-Quarantine and/or Treatment relative to the Influenza
A(H1N1) Global Pandemic

Pursuant to CSC Resolution No. 090920 dated June 26, 2009, the following interim guidelines on the use of vacation and sick leave credits for self-quarantine after travel abroad due to the Influenza A (H1N1) Global Pandemic are hereby prescribed for the guidance of all concerned:

1.0 Purpose

The Circular provides the guidelines for the procedure of availment of leave privileges for absences incurred in relation to self-quarantine for public sector officials and employees who have recently traveled or are planning/scheduled to travel to other countries affected by the Influenza A (H1N1) Global Pandemic.

The said Circular also seeks to provide procedures upon returning to work after exhibiting flu-like symptoms, or after actually being treated for the Influenza A (H1N1) Virus, as applicable.

Moreover, said guidelines seek to ensure that precautionary measures are employed in government agencies to avoid the spread of the said flu infection in the public sector workplace.

The set of guidelines is applicable for the duration of the Influenza A (H1N1) Global Pandemic until the said medical situation has been lifted by the proper health authorities.

2.0 Scope and Coverage

These guidelines apply to all public sector employees and officials, regardless of status of appointment.

For those professions covered by special leave laws, the following or an analogous set of guidelines to be promulgated by the proper authorities for the purpose may also apply taking into consideration the best interests of the service.

3.0 Guidelines

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of each government official/employee or any individual serving the public sector to ensure that he/she employs the necessary measures to prevent the spread of the Influenza A (H1N1) infection in the public sector workplace.

One who feels sick with Influenza-like symptoms¹ or have been exposed to the Influenza A (H1N1) virus must immediately inform his/her supervisor; voluntarily seek immediate medical attention and/or go on self-quarantine, as deemed necessary upon the advise and certification of a licensed government/private physician. This is in order to avert the possible spread of the infection in the workplace.

- 3.2 All officials and employees in the public sector who have a history of travel to other countries affected by the Influenza A (H1N1) Global Pandemic per the WHO/DOH advisories starting two weeks prior to the promulgation of these guidelines shall ensure that upon their return to the Philippines, they shall have submitted themselves to "self-quarantine" in their homes or any appropriate health facility, as applicable.

As provided in the DOH health advisories, those who have a history of travel as reflected in these guidelines must "self-quarantine" for ten (10) calendar days upon arrival in this country.

Officials and employees who have a history of travel abroad as qualified in this guidelines who may or may not exhibit flu-like symptoms (influenza-like illness i.e. fever associated with coughs /colds; muscle aches; fatigue; loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea), should not report back to work unless the said self-quarantine period has elapsed and/or they have been treated, and cleared as being fit to go back to work by the proper health authorities.

- 3.3 Absence from work due to the self-quarantine period and/or treatment of

¹ Source: According to the A (H1N1) Flu Infection information leaflet distributed by the Quezon City Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit of the QC Health Department, "a person infected with the new H1N1 virus will have influenza like illness i.e. fever associated with coughs/cold, muscle aches, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea/vomiting and diarrhea."

the A (H1N1) flu infection, as applicable, may be on official time or charged against one's leave credits, as follows:

Government Official/Employee's Circumstances	Nature of Absence from Work; Applicable Leave of Absence	Procedure Upon Return to Work
<p>Individual has a history of travel abroad as qualified in these guidelines and whose travel is on Official Business/Official Time due to a study grant, a study leave whose period of study is spent abroad, scholarship, training/HR intervention, seminar, conference, fora, or other analogous circumstances</p>	<p>Absence from work for ten (10) calendar days to ensure self-quarantine shall continue to be on <u>official time</u>.</p> <p>Should one eventually exhibit flu-like symptoms beyond the self-quarantine period and/or is treated for Influenza A (H1N1) Infection after the aforesaid 10-day period has elapsed, the prescribed period of observation and treatment shall be deducted from one's sick leave credits.</p>	<p><u>For those who have not exhibited flu-like symptoms:</u></p> <p>A Medical Certificate to be submitted to the agency's HR unit issued by any government/private physician that one has voluntarily self-quarantined him/herself for 10 days upon arrival from the country and has exhibited no flu-like symptoms and is cleared to report back to work.</p>
<p>Individual has a history of travel abroad as qualified in these guidelines and whose travel is due to personal reasons</p>	<p>Being a precautionary measure, absence from work for ten (10) calendar days to ensure self-quarantine shall be charged against one's accumulated sick leave credits.</p> <p>For employees or officials who have already exhausted his/her sick leave credits, Section 56 of the Omnibus Rules on Leave shall apply, as follows:</p> <p><i>"Sec. 56 x x x When an employee had already exhausted his sick leave credits, he can use his vacation leave credits but not vice versa."</i></p> <p>Should one eventually exhibit flu-like symptoms during the quarantine period and/or is treated for Influenza A (H1N1) Infection, the prescribed period of observation and treatment shall be deducted from one's appropriate leave credits as</p>	<p><u>For those who have exhibited flu-like symptoms but were not infected by the Influenza A (H1N1) virus:</u></p> <p>A Medical Certificate to be submitted to the agency's HR unit issued by any government/private physician that one has been treated of his/her flu and is cleared as being fit to report back to work.</p> <p><u>For those who were infected by the Influenza A (H1N1) virus:</u></p>

Government Official/Employee's Circumstances	Nature of Absence from Work; Applicable Leave of Absence	Procedure Upon Return to Work
	qualified above.	<p>A Medical Certificate to be submitted to the agency's HR unit issued by the government health facility responsible for the treatment of the said infection indicating that one has been treated and is cleared as being fit to report back to work.</p> <p>Said health facilities, called Referral Centers for Emerging and Re-Emerging Infectious Diseases may be referred to in the DOH website, www.doh.gov.ph.</p> <p>A list of the said health facilities is also attached to these guidelines, for reference (Please see Annex A)</p>
Individuals who take care of family members/relatives who have been/are being treated for Influenza A (H1N1)	<p>One who has been exposed to the said virus must also submit him/herself to a period of quarantine as prescribed by the proper health authorities.</p> <p>Said period shall be charged to his/her sick leave credits in addition to the period of sick leave of absence spent while taking care of the sick family member/relative.</p>	<p>A Medical Certificate to be submitted to the agency's HR unit issued by any government/private physician that one has 'self-quarantined him/herself' for the appropriate number of days and has not exhibited flu-like</p>

Government Official/Employee's Circumstances	Nature of Absence from Work; Applicable Leave of Absence	Procedure Upon Return to Work
		<p>symptoms and is cleared to report back to work.</p> <p>The procedure upon return to work of one who has been infected by the virus may be referred to in the above matrix</p>
<p>Individual has contracted the Influenza A (H1N1) virus from sources other than having recent travel abroad (whether OB or personal) or from taking care of family members who have contracted the same</p>	<p>Leave of Absence shall be deducted against one's accumulated Sick Leave Credits.</p> <p>Section 56 of the Omnibus Rules on Leave shall also apply.</p>	<p>A Medical Certificate to be submitted to the agency's HR unit issued by government health facilities (Please See Annex A) responsible for the treatment of the said infection indicating that one has been treated of the Influenza A (H1N1) virus and is cleared as being fit to report back to work.</p>

3.4 Those who serve in the public sector on job order basis, contracts of service or through consultancy services are also refrained from reporting to work after a history of recent travel abroad as qualified in these guidelines and/or exposure to or treatment from the Influenza A (H1N1) Virus. The procedures upon return to work as provided in Item 3.3 of these guidelines shall also apply to individuals serving the public sector in the aforementioned capacities.

Agency heads who employ the services of job order contractors or consultants through Contracts of Services may amend or adjust the contract duration to consider the number of days or person-hours lost for not being able to report for work as a result of one's being on self-quarantine and/or

period of observation/treatment for exposure/being infected with the Influenza A (H1N1) virus.

- 3.5 The applicable provisions of the aforesaid guidelines as well as the corresponding procedures upon returning to work of one who has a forthcoming travel abroad (as qualified in these guidelines) on official business/official time, whether on scholarship, on study grant, on study leave whose period of study is spent abroad; on training/HR intervention, seminar, conference, fora, or other analogous circumstances shall be incorporated in the study leave contracts, office orders, and similar documents of concerned officials and employees to ensure proper enforcement of the same.
- 3.6 Those who have forthcoming travel abroad due to personal reasons as defined in this guidelines shall, upon application for vacation leave of absence, be oriented by their immediate superiors/approving authorities of the prescribed procedure for return to work and the deduction of the appropriate leave credits for one's self-quarantine period and/or period of treatment while the Influenza A (H1N1) global pandemic is enforced.
- 3.7 Office heads shall also ensure that the efficiency and productivity standards of work units are met in such cases where periods of absence of concerned officials and staff may bring about setbacks in the delivery of public service.
- 3.8 Whenever necessary, the agency head, upon proper clearance from the Department of Health (DOH), may declare the suspension of office work to allow the DOH to investigate, make recommendations, and assist the Agency in containing the infection through measures such as the decontamination of the workplace and the self-quarantine of agency personnel.

Upon DOH's situational assessment and recommendation, the agency may declare whether the office suspension shall affect the entire work populace or only certain segments of it.

In such cases, internal measures shall be instituted in the said government agencies to compensate for the period of disruption of service delivery.

Suspension of office work in the aforesaid instance shall not be charged against the official or employee's leave credits. However, they may be required to render services to compensate for the period of office suspension as soon as normal office operations resume.

4.0 Responsibilities of the Agency Head

- 4.1 The agency head shall ensure that the aforesaid guidelines are enforced in one's agency as a precautionary measure to avert the possible threat of the Influenza A (H1N1) Infection in the public sector workplace.

- 4.2 The agency head shall also ensure that other proactive measure/s such as information campaign and health advisories are disseminated to its officials and employees as well as clientele to keep them informed of the basic how-tos (**please see Annex A and DOH's Health Advisory**) in preventing the spread of the virus.
- 4.3 The agency head shall ensure that the workers providing essential services such as health workers; first responders, frontline service providers and the like who may have potential contacts with the viral agents causing the said flu are given priority health intervention/s (prophylaxis) as enunciated in Item III of DOH's Interim Guidelines No. 1 (Clinical Management and the Use of Anti-Virals for Influenza A (H1N1) Virus Infection.
- 4.4 The agency head shall ensure the immediate promulgation of internal rules and regulations taking off from this set of general interim guidelines that will take into consideration the best interests of service and the overall efficiency and effectivity of work units within their respective agencies.

5.0 Effectivity

This Circular shall take effect immediately. A succeeding issuance shall be promulgated upon the declaration of proper health authorities of the end of the Influenza A H1N1 Global Pandemic.

However, government employees, officials, and other public servants covered in these Guidelines whose periods of self-quarantine after recent² travel abroad on Official Business/Official Time were deducted against their leave credits prior to the issuance of these Guidelines can have the said leave credits restored through their respective agencies' Human Resource/Personnel Office/s/Units.



RICARDO L. SALUDO
Chairman

June 26, 2009

² *Recent travel abroad* as defined in these Guidelines pertains to the period since the start of the spread of the Influenza A (H1N1) virus in April 2009.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Influenza A (H1N1)

What is Influenza A (H1N1)?

- Influenza A(H1N1) is caused by a novel virus that resulted from the reassortment of 4 viruses from pigs, human and birds
- It is a new virus causing illness in people
- It was first detected in people in April 2009 in the United States
- This virus is spreading from person-to-person, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread
- There is no vaccine yet to protect humans from this virus
- There are existing and recommended medicines that are effective in treating these Influenza A(H1N1)
- Influenza A(H1N1) can be fatal to humans due to severe respiratory distress (pneumonia)

Why this new Influenza A(H1N1) virus is sometimes called “swine flu”?

This virus was originally referred to as “swine flu” because laboratory tests showed that many of the genes in this new virus were very similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs in North America. But further study has shown that this new virus is very different from what normally circulates in North American pigs. It has two genes from flu viruses that normally circulate in pigs in Europe and Asia and avian genes and human genes. Scientists call this a “quadruple reassortant” virus.

Do pigs carry this virus and can people catch this virus from a pig?

At this time, there is no evidence that swine in the United States are infected with this new virus. However, there are flu viruses that commonly cause outbreaks of illness in pigs. Most of the time, these viruses do not infect people, but influenza viruses can spread back and forth between pigs and people.

Are there human infections with this virus?

Yes. Cases of human infection with this virus were first confirmed in the U.S. in Southern California and near Guadalupe Country, Texas. The outbreak intensified rapidly from that time and more and more states have been reporting cases of illness from this virus. Other countries with confirmed cases include Mexico, United States, Canada, Australia, Austria, New Zealand, Japan, Korea, China (Mainland China, Hongkong), Portugal, Poland, Guatemala, Spain, Costa Rica, Colombia, Denmark, El Salvador,

France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Brazil, Argentina, Panama.

Is this new virus contagious?

Yes, Influenza A(H1N1) virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human. However, at this time, it is not known how easily the virus spreads between people.

What are the signs and symptoms of this virus in humans?

- Similar to the symptoms of regular flu such as:
 - Fever
 - Headache
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or joint pains
 - Lack of appetite
 - Runny nose
 - Sore throat
 - Cough

- Some cases have reported diarrhea, nausea and vomiting.

How severe is illness associated with this virus?

It is not known at this time how severe this virus will be in the general population. Experts are studying the medical histories of people who have been infected with this virus to determine whether some people may be at greater risk from infection, serious illness, or hospitalization from the virus.

How does Influenza A(H1N1) virus spread?

- Coughing or sneezing by people with influenza

- Touching things with flu viruses on it and then touching one's mouth, nose or eyes

Can I get infected with Influenza A(H1N1) from eating or preparing pork?

- No, you can't get influenza A(H1N1) by eating properly handled and thorough cooked pork and pork products
- The virus is killed by cooking temperatures of 160 F/70 C.

What is the incubation period?

- 7 to 10 days from the time of exposure to the first onset of signs and symptoms

How long can an infected person spread Influenza A(H1N1) to others?

- Infected person maybe contagious from one day before they develop symptoms to up to 7 days after they get sick. Children might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

Are there medicines to treat infection with AH1N1?

Yes. Oseltamivir or zanamivir are the recommended drugs to treat and or prevent infection with this virus. You have to consult a doctor before using these drugs to avoid resistance.

Is there prophylaxis for the Influenza A(H1N1)?

Yes. For further information refer to [Interim Guideline # 1.](#)

Is vaccine available to protect people from getting infected with AH1N1?

No, at present there is no vaccine against this virus.

How can we prevent the spread of the virus?

1. Observe proper personal hygiene:

- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water, at least for 20 seconds (or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers) especially after handling patients and specimen, before and after eating, after using the toilet and as necessary.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.

2. Increase your body's resistance

- Have at least 8 hours of sleep
- Be physically active
- Manage your stress
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Eat nutritious food, especially fruits and vegetables

3. Social distancing.

- Avoid crowded places.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you are sick until you are free from symptoms to prevent the spread of the virus.

What to do if somebody gets sick?

- If there is flu like symptoms, consult the doctor immediately.
- Report to the proper health authorities .

Is there a pandemic risk on Influenza A(H1N1)?

Yes. If the Influenza A(H1N1) establishes efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission then it can cause an influenza pandemic. The impact of a pandemic is difficult to predict. It depends on virulence of the virus, existing immunity among people, cross protection by antibodies acquired from seasonal influenza infection and host factors.

The following DOH Hospitals are designated as Referral Centers for Emerging and Re-emerging Infectious Diseases like Influenza A(H1N1):

National Referral Center

Research for Tropical Medicine (RITM)

Alabang, Muntinlupa, Metro Manila

Tel No. 809-7599

Sub-national Referral Centers

A. Luzon and Metro Manila

San Lazaro Hospital

Quiricada St., Sta. Cruz, Manila

Tel. No. (02) 732-3776 to 78

Lung Center of the Philippines

Quezon Avenue, Quezon City

Tel. No. (02) 924-6101/Fax No.:924-0707

B. Visayas

Vicente Sotto Medical Center

Cebu City

Tel. No. (032) 253-9891/254-0057

C. Mindanao

Davao Medical Center

Bajada, Davao City

Tel. No. (082) 227-2731

Satellite Referral Hospitals

Regional Hospitals/Medical Centers of 16 regions (list down the 16 regional hospitals)

Mariano Marcos Memorial Hosp. and Medical Center
Batac, Ilocos Norte
(077) 792-3144; 792-5002; 792-5051

Cagayan Valley Medical Center
Tuguegarao, Cagayan
(078) 844-3789; 844-1410; 844-0033; 0917-9356201

Jose B. Lingad Memorial General Hospital
San Fernando, Pampanga
(045) 961-3921; 961-3380; 961-3363

Batangas Regional Hospital
Batangas City, Batangas
(043) 723-0911; 980-1743

Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital
Legaspi City, Albay
(052) 483-0016; 483-0015; 480-0635; 483-0808

Western Visayas Medical Center
Mandurriao, Iloilo City, Iloilo
(033) 321-1797; 321-0638; 321-2841

Western Visayas Regional Hospital
Bacolod City
(03) 433-2697 435-1591 loc. 241

Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center
Magsaysay Blvd., Tacloban City
(053) 321-133; 321-3129; 321-2816; 325-8438

Zamboanga City Medical Center
Zamboanga City
(062) 991-2934

Northern Mindanao Medical Center
Cagayan de Oro City
(08822) 728-829; 723-735
(088) 858-4064
(0917) 950-4287
(0918) 534-5333

Cotabato Regional and Medical Center
Cotabato City, North Cotabato
(064) 421-2192; 421-2340 local 103

Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center
Baguio City
(074) 442-3165

Caraga Regional Hospital
Surigao City, Surigao del Norte
(086) 231-7090; 826-2459; 826-3157


Be vigilant!

If you have flu like symptoms and history of travel to Influenza A(H1N1) affected countries/areas, immediately consult a doctor.

For more information on Influenza A(H1N1), call (02) 711-1001 or 711-1002

To-DOH Alerto Laban sa FLU!

Source: DOH website: www.doh.gov.ph



Health Advisory Influenza A(H1N1)

Prepared by:
National Center for Disease Prevention and Control
National Center for Health Promotion

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- This virus is spreading from person-to-person, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread.
- There is no vaccine yet to protect humans from this virus.
- There are existing and recommended medicines that are effective in treating these Influenza A(H1N1)
- Influenza A(H1N1) can be fatal to humans due to severe respiratory distress (pneumonia)

Signs and symptoms in humans

similar to the symptoms of regular flu such as

- Fever
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Muscle or joint pains
- Lack of appetite
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Some cases have reported having diarrhea vomiting or nausea

Mode of Transmission

- Exposure to droplets from the cough and sneeze of the infected person, or by touching things with the virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

Influenza A(H1N1) is not transmitted by eating thoroughly cooked pork.

DOH Hospitals designated as Referral Centers for Emerging and Re-emerging Infectious Diseases

National Referral Center

Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM)
Alabang, Muntinlupa, Metro Manila
Tel. No. 809-7599

Sub-national Referral Center

A. Luzon and Metro Manila

San Lazaro Hospital
Quiricada St., Sta. Cruz, Manila
Tel. No. (02) 732-3776 to 78

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Satellite Referral Hospitals

Regional Hospitals/Medical Centers of 16 regions

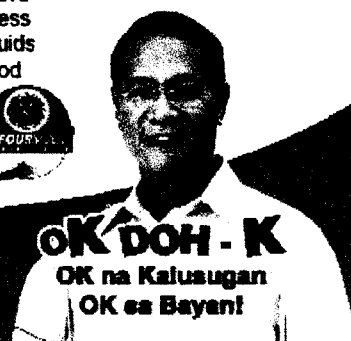
Prevention

- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing
- Always wash hands with soap and water
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Avoid close contact with sick people
- Increase your body's resistance
 - Have at least 8 hours of sleep
 - Be physically active
 - Manage your stress
 - Drink plenty of fluids
 - Eat nutritious food

**To-DOH Alerto
Laban sa Flu!**

Be vigilant!

If you any of the above signs and symptoms, immediately consult a doctor.
For more information on Influenza A(H1N1), call (02) 711-1001 or 711-1002



Influenza A (H1N1)