

Glen Abbot Ltd.

Swine Flu Briefing 30 – 23/08/2009

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Current Situation:

The spread of H1N1 continues to slow. The Chief Medical Officer in England, Sir Liam Donaldson, gave his weekly briefing on Friday here are some of the key points:

- The majority of cases continue to be mild. There is no sign that the virus is changing. It is not becoming more severe or developing resistance to anti-virals.
- The weekly GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness in England and Wales in the week ending 16 August: 21.1 per 100,000 people
- The weekly consultation rate has fallen by 37% from last week to this week
- Deaths related to swine flu in England now 54 with five in Scotland, giving a UK total of 59 The estimated number of cases of swine flu in England in the past week: 11,000 (range: 6,000-25,000)

In the USA during the week of August 9-15, 2009, a review of key indicators found that influenza activity had decreased slightly from the previous week. However, there were still higher levels of influenza activity than is normal for this time of year. 98% of Influenza Like Illnesses (ILI) were H1N1.

Here are some of the results from a study carried out in the USA which gives their perspective on the infection rates:

- Secondary ILI attack rate in household contacts: 12 %.
- Overall proportion of hospitalisations: 8 %.
- Overall case fatality: 0.2 %.
- Most cases (58 %) and highest incidence in 5–24 years age group, but second highest incidence in children under five years of age.
- Most hospitalisations (34 %) in 5–24 years age group, but highest age-specific hospitalisation rate per 100 000 population in children under five years of age.
- Highest age-specific proportion of hospitalisations in cases of influenza A(H1N1)v infection is 65 years of age and older.
- Most deaths in 5–24 years age group, but highest case-fatality ratio in persons 65 years of age and older.

The WHO and anti virals

The WHO have issued guidance on the use of anti virals and interestingly they say most people don't particularly need them! Here is the exact quote:

Worldwide, most patients infected with the pandemic virus continue to experience typical influenza symptoms and fully recover within a week, even without any form of medical treatment. Healthy patients with uncomplicated illness need not be treated with antivirals.

.....healthy children, older than 5 years, need not be given antiviral treatment unless their illness persists or worsens

However for more serious cases they say the following:

Evidence reviewed by the panel indicates that oseltamivir, when properly prescribed, can significantly reduce the risk of pneumonia (a leading cause of death for both pandemic and seasonal influenza) and the need for hospitalization'

How do you tell if someone is becoming more seriously ill? Again this is covered:

- *shortness of breath, either during physical activity or while resting*
- *difficulty in breathing*
- *turning blue*
- *bloody or coloured sputum*
- *chest pain*
- *altered mental status*
- *high fever that persists beyond 3 days*
- *low blood pressure.*

In children, danger signs include fast or difficult breathing, lack of alertness, difficulty in waking up, and little or no desire to play.

Lies, d**n lies and statistics

The numbers that float about in the media often seem to contradict and confuse. None of which helps those of us who actually have to plan for this. Well there is a part of a BBC Radio programme about numbers which goes into this and I have attached a link. It is the first part of the programme and hopefully it tells you just how difficult it is to be accurate about anything!

In case the link doesn't work everywhere the programme is called More or Less and should be available on the BBC iPlayer. The swine flu section starts at 2 minutes in.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b00m44rq/More_or_Less_21_08_2009/

Webinar

I am doing a webinar on behalf of the BCI this week which will cover the Facilities Management, Supplier Management and Testing elements of Pandemic Planning. It is free to log on and you don't have to be a member of the BCI to listen.

If you would like to register use this link:

<http://www.brighttalk.com/webcasts/5641/attend>

Just be careful of the time! It is 11:00 am EDT which is 16:00 UK time.

There have been quite a number of requests for a re-run of the first webinar in this series which covered mostly HR issues. I'm talking to the organisers about whether this could be done and a possible date. Full details on the briefing if we can set this up.

Past Briefings

All previous briefings are available at our website:

www.glenabbot.co.uk

Training and Consultancy

We provide specific pandemic training courses both publicly and bespoke to companies. If you are interested please contact me directly or email Geoff Howard at Continuity Shop (goward@continuityshop.com).

We can also help organisation review or create plans so if you need any assistance please contact me via this email or Andrew Sinclair on Andrew.sinclair@glenabbot.co.uk. Our office number is 01738 580580.

Yours sincerely



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