

Novel Coronavirus 2019 Statement

By Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul - Minister of Public Health

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Dear Distinguished guests and reporters

There has been news reported about an outbreak of pneumonia caused by a novel coronavirus in Wuhan, People's Republic of China. The Ministry of Public Health of Thailand has been implementing its surveillance and disease control functions according to the standardized protocol for emerging infectious diseases. We have conducted fever screening of travelers from all direct flights from Wuhan, China at the four major airports, including Suvarnabhumi, Don Mueang, Chiang Mai, and Phuket since January 3rd, 2020. Among 58 flights, 9,122 passengers and aircrew members were screened for respiratory symptoms. Eight people met the criteria for investigation. An additional three suspected cases sought treatment at private hospitals (in Chonburi, Rayong and Bangkok provinces) and the other suspected case was admitted at Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute.

A total of 12 people met the criteria for investigation. Follow up is being conducted among 40 high-risk close contacts. Most of the 12 patients under investigation (PUI's) were infected with seasonal influenza viruses. Eight people have already recovered and have been released to return home. **However, one case identified via screening checkpoint at the airport exhibited a high fever. The laboratory results showed the novel coronavirus (nCoV), which was referred to as the first case in Thailand and the first imported case outside of China. This case has been admitted at Bamrasnaradura Infectious Diseases Institute. The patient currently has no fever or respiratory symptoms and is waiting to return home.** None of the 16 close contacts were infected with this novel virus.

Regarding the nCoV situation in China, there were 59 patients under investigation, consisting of 41 confirmed cases and 1 death. Most patients had contact with the same animal and seafood trade market in Wuhan. Most of them were customers or workers in that market. WHO stated that there are no reports of human to human transmission.

I have tasked the Ministry of Public Health to coordinate with the Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Tourism and Sport, and the Royal Thai Police to increase the effectiveness of surveillance and disease control including giving advice and taking care of all passengers who depart from China to stay in Thailand.

The Ministry of Public Health has been actively implementing control measures to cope with this public health threat. The four major Thai airports that have direct flights from Wuhan (Suvarnabhumi, Don Mueang, Phuket, and Chiang Mai international airports) have adopted strict screening measures for travelers. Health officials have also bolstered surveillance and diagnosis of disease in government hospitals, private hospitals, and tourist attractions.

Practices for people

People can still travel to China without any restrictions. Travelers can protect themselves from this disease by avoiding crowded places or markets selling carcasses or live animals. It is also recommended that people wash their hands, eat food that is fully cooked and avoid contact with patients showing symptoms of coughing, sneezing, or runny nose. If anyone has symptoms including coughing, sneezing, panting or runny nose within 14 days after departing from Wuhan, China, please seek medical advice at the hospital and inform the doctor regarding travel history to China so that the doctor will be able to make a further diagnosis.

For more information, please call the DDC Hotline 1422