

2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Considerations for Healthcare

Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was first identified in Wuhan, China in late December 2019 and subsequently spread to other nations including the USA and Canada. Our healthcare systems and healthcare workers are on the front lines of this significant threat to public health. Practicing recognized prevention and mitigation measures will help reduce the threat to all and prevent continuing spread of the illness. (Information in this bulletin is current as of 1/31/20.)

Background

On 31 December 2019, WHO was alerted to several cases of pneumonia in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The virus raised concerns because it did not match any other known virus.

One week later, on 7 January, Chinese authorities confirmed they had identified a new coronavirus subsequently named '2019-nCoV' or 'Wuhan virus'. Coronavirus is a family of viruses that include the common cold, as well as viruses such as SARS and MERS.

The outbreak has sickened thousands in China and is responsible for many deaths. Initially, the virus was associated with animal-to-person transmission but it's now clear that person-to-person spread is occurring.

While only a relative few cases are currently confirmed in the United States and Canada, there are many more "persons under investigation" (PUI.) Health authorities in both countries consider the risk to the public as "low" at this time.

More cases are likely to occur in the coming days, including more cases in the United States and Canada. Given patterns which occurred previously with MERS and SARS outbreaks, it is likely that person-to-person spread will continue to occur. Cases in all healthcare settings, and especially hospitals, may also occur.

Travel restrictions of one form or another are in place both within China and to/from other countries to stem the spread of the virus internationally.

Initial cases outside of China were associated with only those who had traveled from Wuhan, China which prompted the United States and Canada to conduct enhanced screening efforts at airports and other ports of entry.

As of this writing, the United State has its 1st case of person-to-person transmission between a woman who had traveled from Wuhan to the US and her husband who had not traveled with her. CDC is anticipating additional cases of person-to-person transmissions in the coming days and weeks.

The situation is very dynamic as more information about the virus and the illness becomes known. It is imperative that healthcare providers remain diligent in staying informed, practicing standard infection control practices as well as any new practices identified as necessary as research indicates. CDC and WHO are stressing standard practices as well as issuing interim guidelines specifically for 2019-nCoV.

CDC Guidance

Interim Guidance for Healthcare Professionals

Pending further knowledge and research on 2019-nCoV, and that no specific treatment or vaccine is available, interim guidelines for supportive care, and investigation of PUI's are based on practices from the MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV outbreaks.

Guidance information specifically for healthcare professionals as bulleted below can be found on the CDC website at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/hcp/index.html>

Interim Guidance for Healthcare Professionals

Includes specific discussion and supporting forms and resources for:

- Criteria to Guide Evaluation of Patients Under Investigation (PUI) for 2019-nCoV
- Recommendations for Reporting, Testing, and Specimen Collection
- Interim Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients Under Investigation for 2019-nCoV

Infection Control

Includes specific discussion and supporting forms and resources for:

- Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Known or Patients Under Investigation for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in a Healthcare Setting

Preparedness Checklists

Includes specific discussion and supporting forms and resources for:

- Healthcare Professional Preparedness Checklist For Transport and Arrival of Patients Potentially Infected with 2019-nCoV
- Hospital Preparedness Checklist for Suspected or Confirmed 2019-nCoV Patients

Implementing Home Care

Includes specific discussion and supporting forms and resources for:

- Interim Guidance for Implementing Home Care of People Not Requiring Hospitalization for 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)

Infection Control

General Recommendations

Infection control procedures: administrative and engineering controls, environmental hygiene, correct work practices, and appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) are all necessary to prevent infections from spreading

during healthcare delivery. Prompt detection and effective triage and isolation of potentially infectious patients are essential to prevent unnecessary exposures among patients, healthcare personnel, and visitors. CDC recommended practices:

1. Minimize chance for exposures
2. Adherence to standard, contact and airborne precautions, including the use of eye protection
3. Manage visitor access and movement within the facility
4. Implement engineering controls
5. Monitor and manage ill and exposed healthcare personnel
6. Train and educate healthcare personnel
7. Implement environmental infection control
8. Establish reporting within healthcare facilities and to public health authorities

Summary

Diligence, Prevention, and Mitigation are Key

Following recognized practices that healthcare already has in place and has been trained for will help to keep this threat in check.

Please contact your FNA Service Team if you have any questions or if you need assistance.

FNA is here for you

When you partner with us, our value to you is that you are at the center of a vast network of experts. We advise you on important information that you and your clients should know so that you can protect what matters most: one of your most important business assets - your clients.

Learn more at fnainsurance.com