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6 December 2013

To: All Bedspace Apartments Licensees,

**A Confirmed Case of Human Infection with Avian Influenza A(H7N9) virus and
Activation of Serious Response Level of Government's Preparedness Plan**

As advised by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health, there is a confirmed case of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus in Hong Kong. The patient is a 36-year-old Indonesian maid. She lives with her employer's family in Hong Kong. The patient is now staying in intensive care unit. Her current condition is critical.

Preliminary epidemiological investigation revealed that the patient went to Shenzhen of Guangdong Province on 17 November. She bought a live chicken in a market and ate the chicken after cooking it with a friend in Shenzhen. CHP is investigating the source of her infection. According to available information, this is likely to be an imported infection. CHP is tracing the exposed close contacts of the patients and will provide them with chemoprophylaxis and put them under quarantine. So far, four of the close contacts had symptoms including cough, runny nose or sore throat but no fever and their specimens have all have been tested negative for avian influenza A(H7N9).

The Government has raised the influenza response level from "Alert" Response Level to "Serious" Response Level under the Framework of Government's Preparedness Plan for Influenza Pandemic.

Prior to this case, no human infections with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus were

recorded in Hong Kong. According to the latest update from the National Health and Family Planning Commission of the People's Republic of China (28 November 2013), a total of 140 cases of human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9) virus have been reported.

To prevent avian influenza, please be reminded to observe strict hand hygiene, avoid touching mouth, nose or eyes and avoid visiting wet markets with live poultry or contacting poultry especially when travelling to H7N9 virus affected areas. Wash hands frequently with liquid soap, especially before handling food or eating, after going to toilet, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretion after coughing or sneezing. In addition, the following measures are also advised:

- Avoid touching poultry/birds/animals or their droppings;
- Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water immediately in case of contact with poultry/birds/animals or their droppings;
- Build up good body resistance and have a healthy lifestyle. This can be achieved through a balanced diet, regular exercise, adequate rest, reducing stress and no smoking;
- Poultry and eggs should be thoroughly cooked before eating;
- Maintain good environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- Avoid going to crowded places with poor ventilation if feeling unwell; and
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, furniture, commonly shared items and floor at least daily by using appropriate disinfectant (For non-metallic surface, disinfect with 1 part of household bleach in 99 parts of water, wait until dry and then rinse with water. For metallic surface, disinfect with 70% alcohol).

For those with recent history of travel (especially to affected areas with avian influenza cases) and have contact with poultry or history of visiting wet markets with live poultry, they should wear a mask and consult doctors promptly if they have flu-like symptoms, and inform the doctor of their exposure history. You may wish to note that CHP has issued a guideline on the prevention of avian influenza in workplace which can be accessed from the CHP website at http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/healthadvice2013_en.pdf. More information on avian Influenza is available at CHP website at: <http://www.chp.gov.hk>.

We should be grateful if you could help disseminate the content of this letter to your colleagues, work associates and business partners so that they would be kept informed of the situation and to adopt preventive measures.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours faithfully,

Signed

(Winston SK LEUNG)

Chief Officer, Licensing Authority