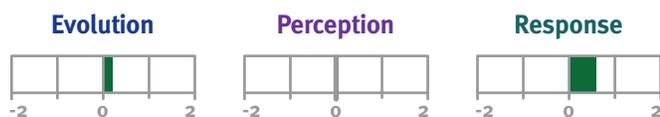


Wednesday, June 17, 2009

## STATE OF SANITARY EMERGENCY DECLARED IN CHILE

Today, the Chilean Health Ministry reported its third death related to H1N1 and officially declared a State of Sanitary Emergency. The announcement classifies H1N1 as “an epidemic” in Chile and gives the Health Ministry “extraordinary powers” to relocate health personnel or even contract emergency health personnel in case medical facilities become overwhelmed. It also allows the Ministry to obtain any resources necessary to combat the H1N1 virus without waiting for government approval. Doctors are now authorized to quarantine anyone that may have been in contact with those infected with the virus, and to dispense antiviral medications without charge to anyone who may need them.<sup>1</sup>

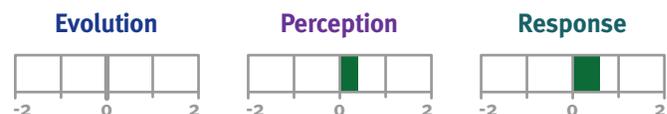
Chile now has 3,125 confirmed cases — more than any other country in South America. While some countries such as Australia and Thailand are actively de-emphasizing public health screening and testing in response to H1N1, Chile is taking the opposite approach. This comes a week after medical facilities in Buenos Aires were overwhelmed by people worried about the virus. Both perceptions of fear and the resulting reactions merit continued monitoring.



## AUSTRALIA CHANGES PANDEMIC PHASE

Yesterday, Australia’s Health Minister, Nicola Roxon, officially announced that the country was about to officially enter a new phase of pandemic (referred to as the “protect” phase in Australia). The reason cited for the move is recognition that H1N1 has not been as severe as originally suspected. The estimates prepared by the government show that hospitalizations and deaths have only been a fraction of what they are during regular flu season, even though the infection rate has been higher.<sup>2</sup>

This new phase of pandemic in Australia will involve much tighter measures on antiviral distributions, while at the same time relaxing containment measures such as school closings and airport screenings. Distributions of Tamiflu and Relenza will be reserved for cases in higher risk individuals, such as pregnant women or people with other underlying medical conditions.<sup>3</sup> Some states, such as Victoria, which account for over 60% of Australia’s cases, will take more time to move into this new “protect” phase, but the Health Ministry hopes it to be in effect nationwide by Friday.<sup>4</sup> The major underlying reason for limiting the distributions of antivirals is the hope of keeping the H1N1 virus from developing resistance.

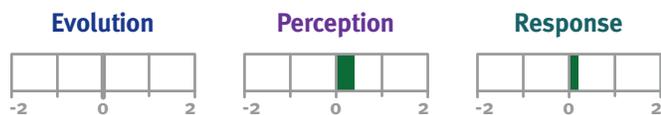


This document has been prepared by bio-era as a part of the “Thinking Ahead” service, designed to support commercial decision-making in response to the anticipated commercial and economic impacts of novel H1N1 pandemic influenza. The service seeks to monitor and evaluate current developments based on their significance with respect to three criteria: the significance of the news item for (1) the evolution of the physical disease event; (2) its effects on perceptions of threat (i.e., fear); and (3) examples of reaction or response to (1) and (2) above. To the extent possible, bio-era seeks to integrate an understanding of the particular news items identified as leading indicators or signposts within a broader bio-era scenario-based decision-support framework. To learn more about the service, the scenarios framework, or to enroll, please visit [www.bio-era.net](http://www.bio-era.net).

## THAILAND DECREASING H1N1 TESTING EFFORTS

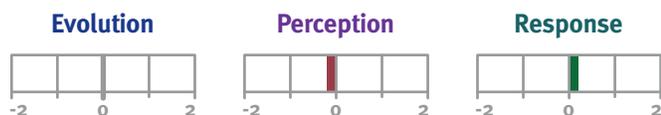
The Public Health Ministry of Thailand announced that it is scaling back its efforts against the H1N1 virus, and urging health officials to limit testing for the virus only to those individuals that would be most at risk for severe cases of H1N1. It also announced that it plans to decrease screening measures at Bangkok’s International Airport.<sup>5</sup>

One reason cited for the move is their experience of the H1N1 virus as “just a flu and low in human severity,” said Thailand’s Disease Control Department spokesperson. The other underlying reason is the economic cost of the testing and screening. The Health Ministry was analyzing 200-300 samples, a day for H1N1 and the Department of Disease Control admitted they did not have enough money to support this service.<sup>6</sup> Other countries, such as Australia, are also starting to scale back surveillance and testing for the virus.



## CHINA SETTING UP WORST CASE SCENARIO PLANS

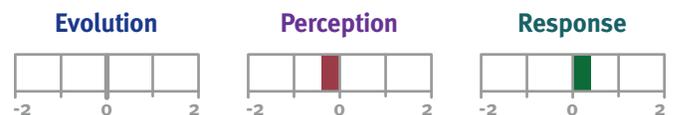
China has been making worst case contingency plans for H1N1. The worst-case response plans call for a variety of social distancing measures, including restricted movement in residential areas, closing of schools, cancellations of gatherings or meetings, and the closing of entertainment venues to prevent the virus from spreading. China has already been implementing strict travel screening and quarantine measures to help battle the spread of H1N1. This worst case contingency plan is not going into effect yet, but the Health Ministry did release outlines of the plan as the number of confirmed cases in China continues to grow.<sup>7</sup>



## TEXT MESSAGE HOAX ELICITS H1N1 PANIC IN UGANDA

A text message hoax evoked panic in Kampala, Uganda yesterday. The message read, “Ministry of Health warning; to avoid swine flu which is suspected to be already in Uganda, you are advised not to eat pork or be near pigs for the time being. The first case [of swine flu] reported in Ggaba and Nakulabye...” The message also started up rumors that two people had already died from the virus. The rumors quickly circulated, and even had members of the parliament in an admitted panic. “We want to know the truth because we know such information can throw the country into a stampede,” stated one Member of Parliament worried that the messages were in fact true. The Health Ministry quickly put to rest the rumors, and calming people around Kampala by affirming that Uganda still did not have any confirmed H1N1 cases, and that even if some cases are found, the country is extremely well-prepared.<sup>8</sup> Uganda had four people exhibiting symptoms, but tests came back negative for H1N1.

Outside of Egypt, the WHO has not officially confirmed any cases of H1N1 in other African countries.

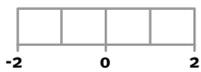
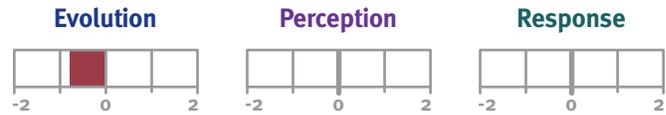


## NEW EVIDENCE OF HUMAN-TO-ANIMAL TRANSMISSIONS

“Preliminary” findings from scientists and veterinarians in the UK, conducting studies on H1N1 transmission from humans to animals, seem to demonstrate that the virus is easily transferable to animals from human hosts. While staying very cautious with their findings and reiterating that they are only “preliminary”, so as to not draw any firm conclusions, their experiment of infecting a group of pigs with H1N1 showed that the pigs were susceptible to the virus and could transfer it to other pigs.<sup>9</sup>

Human-to-animal transmission is already widely suspected, and many countries have developed guidance for

pig keepers in response. The questions raised by this study, and the potential implications for pork sales if widespread infection of pig herds is suspected or reported merits continued monitoring.



Bio-era's judgement regarding the extent to which a development is positive or negative for: (1) the physical evolution of the disease, (2) perceptions of the disease, and (3) future disease event impacts.

	-2	0	2
<b>Physical Evolution</b> How significant is the development with respect to the evolution, transmissability, and virulence of the disease?	Indicates or portends higher transmission, transmissability, and/or virulence of the disease	No Net Change	Indicates or portends lower transmission, transmissability, and/or virulence of the disease
<b>Perception</b> How significant is the development with respect to perceptions of threat (i.e., fears of the disease)?	Indicates or promotes heightened fear of the disease	No Net Effect	Indicates or promotes lower fear of the disease
<b>Response/Reaction</b> To what degree does the response help or hinder the effort to mitigate the impacts the disease?	Expected to exacerbate disease impacts	No Net Impact	Expected to mitigate disease impacts

- 1 *Buenos Aires Herald*. June 17, 2009. See: <http://www.buenosairesherald.com/BreakingNews/View/4101>
- 2 *Sydney Morning Herald*. "Swine Flu Measures Scaled Back as Infection Fears Diminish." June 17, 2009. See: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/swine-flu-measures-scaled-back-as-infection-fears-diminish-20090617-chy2.html>
- 3 *Sydney Morning Herald*. "Swine Flu Measures Scaled Back as Infection Fears Diminish." June 17, 2009. See: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/swine-flu-measures-scaled-back-as-infection-fears-diminish-20090617-chy2.html>
- 4 *Channel News Asia*. "Australia raises H1N1 flu alert level." June 17, 2009. See: [http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp\\_asiapacific/view/436634/1/.html](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/436634/1/.html)
- 5 *The Nation*. "Flu Tests to Be Focused on Most at Risk." June 17, 2009. See: [http://nationmultimedia.com/2009/06/18/national/national\\_30105415.php](http://nationmultimedia.com/2009/06/18/national/national_30105415.php)
- 6 *The Nation*. "Flu Tests to Be Focused on Most at Risk." June 17, 2009. See: [http://nationmultimedia.com/2009/06/18/national/national\\_30105415.php](http://nationmultimedia.com/2009/06/18/national/national_30105415.php)
- 7 Reuters. "China Set Out New Quarantine Regulations for Flu." June 17, 2009. See: <http://www.reuters.com/article/africaCrisis/idUSPEK39076>
- 8 *Daily Monitor*. "Swine Flu Death Reports Spark Panic..." June 17, 2009. See: [http://www.monitor.co.ug/artman/publish/news/Swine\\_flu\\_death\\_reports\\_spark\\_panic\\_govt\\_says\\_its\\_a\\_hoax\\_86651.shtml](http://www.monitor.co.ug/artman/publish/news/Swine_flu_death_reports_spark_panic_govt_says_its_a_hoax_86651.shtml)
- 9 *Guardian*. "Experiment Suggests Swine Flu can Jump from Humans to Animals." June 17, 2009. See: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jun/17/humans-transfer-swine-flu-pigs>