

UAE on Full Flu Alert

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DUBAI/ABU DHABI - Hospitals across the country are on an alert for cases of A(H1N1), according to Humaid Mohammed Obaid Al Qattami, UAE Minister of Health, on Sunday.

In an update posted on the Ministry of Health website, the minister confirmed that the UAE is still free from the outbreak that has infected over 2,000 people in at least 25 countries worldwide.

Al Qattami said the UAE was taking preventive measures to ensure the prevention of A(H1N1) from entering the country by activating its pandemic preparedness plan.

"All the hospitals in the country have assigned isolation rooms and are fully equipped with related medical equipment, single-time use masks and preventive uniforms," he added.

He also said the UAE has satisfactory available medications to be used to treat A(H1N1)flu.

"Training workshops for health workers are being implemented in all hospitals, primary health care clinics, and preventive medicine units as part of the preparedness plan," said the minister. At this stage (Phase 5 of 6), the World Health Organisation advises against restrictions on regular travel and closure of borders. However, the UAE Embassy in the US has asked its citizens to avoid travel to areas in the US where cases have been reported.

Meanwhile, according to the national news agency Wam, Shaikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister of UAE and Chairman of the National Committee on Emergency Response to Bird Flu, has instructed the delivery of 100,000 capsules of TamiFlu (oseltamivir phosphate) for treatment.

"All potentials and energies are mobilised to keep the swine flu at bay," he affirmed. Shaikh Hamdan said the Health Authority-Abu Dhabi (HAAD) has been tasked with coordinating with the Ministry of Health to secure the required quantities of the medicine so as to replenish stocks. He praised at the steps being taken by the National Emergency and Crisis Management Authority (NCEMA) to pool efforts of ministries and other bodies.

Earlier this month, Al Qattami also participated in the emergency meeting of the Executive Board of the Arab Ministers' Council in Riyadh.

The meeting finalised the setting up of a unified reporting centre for the GCC region. The Arab ministers advised for continuous follow up on the latest updates regarding the disease, vaccine production, exchange of scientific information and expertise, and early and immediate reporting of suspected cases present in any Arab country.

(Zawya)