

Union Health Ministry decides to proactively review preparedness measures against respiratory illnesses in view of emerging public health situation in China

Advises States/UTs to immediately review public health and hospital preparedness measures

All States/UTs to implement 'Operational Guidelines for Revised Surveillance Strategy in the context of COVID-19'

Trends of ILI/SARI to be closely monitored by District and State surveillance

Increase in respiratory illness predominantly due to usual causes like Influenza, Mycoplasma pneumonia, SARS-CoV-2

Health Ministry closely monitoring the situation; no need for alarm

Posted On: 26 NOV 2023 2:04PM by PIB Delhi

In view of the recent reports indicating a surge in respiratory illness in children in northern China in the recent weeks, the Union Health Ministry has proactively decided to review the preparedness measures against respiratory illnesses, as a matter of abundant caution. This is noted to be important in view of the ongoing influenza and winter season that results in an increase in respiratory illness cases. Government of India is closely monitoring the situation, and indicated that there is no need for any alarm.

In a letter by Union Health Secretary to States and UTs, they have been advised to immediately review public health and hospital preparedness measures viz. availability of HR, hospital beds, drugs & vaccines for

influenza, medical oxygen, antibiotics, personal protective equipment, testing kits and reagents, functionality of oxygen plants and ventilators, infection control practices in health facilities, at a senior level.

All States and Union Territories have been advised to implement 'Operational Guidelines for Revised Surveillance Strategy in the context of COVID-19', shared earlier this year, which provides for integrated surveillance of respiratory pathogens presenting as cases of influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory illness (SARI). They have also been asked to ensure that the trends of ILI/SARI should be closely monitored by the district and state surveillance units of Integrated Disease Surveillance Project (IDSP), particularly of children and adolescents. The data of ILI/SARI is required to be uploaded on IDSP- IHIP portal particularly from the public health institutions including medical college hospitals. States also asked to send nasal and throat swab samples of patients with SARI, particularly of children and adolescents, to Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratories (VRDL's) located in the States for testing for respiratory pathogens. The cumulative effect of implementation of these precautionary and proactive collaborative measures is expected to counter any potential situation and ensure the safety and well-being of the citizens.

Recently, information shared by WHO has indicated an increase in respiratory illness in northern parts of China. This is predominantly attributed to usual causes like Influenza, Mycoplasma pneumonia, SARS-CoV-2 etc. As per WHO, the release of Covid-19 restrictions coinciding with the onset of winter season in addition to cyclical trend of respiratory illnesses such as Mycoplasma pneumonia have led to this surge. While WHO has sought additional information from Chinese authorities, it is assessed that there is no cause for any alarm at the moment.

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**MV**

**HFW/States advised Respiratory Illness/26thNovember2023/1**

(Release ID: 1979931)