

“Swine Flu” and International Students in NZ

30 April 2009

The outbreak of swine influenza based in Mexico is creating a global wave of concern regarding travel. With a small number of people in New Zealand confirmed to have contracted this strain of influenza during a trip to Mexico, these concerns are now targeted toward New Zealand among the other affected countries.

It is important to address any concerns promptly and honestly, so that rumours do not spread. Following is the situation in New Zealand at this time.

A small number of students returning from a trip to Mexico contracted this new strain of influenza. The students were quarantined upon return to New Zealand, treated with anti-viral medication, and are all recovering well. Other suspected cases are being treated similarly, and nobody in New Zealand has died from this illness.

New Zealand has high stocks of “Tamiflu” anti-viral medication which has been very effective in treating this strain of influenza. The government feels that we are keeping the situation under control and a widespread outbreak in New Zealand is unlikely.

Prime Minister John Key has stated “I still believe it's very safe to travel to New Zealand. It's important to put it in perspective. It's highly likely that most countries will have some outbreak of swine flu, New Zealand is handling it well, we've got high stocks of Tamiflu, we're taking the situation seriously.”

At this time we are not aware of any international students who have contracted, or are suspected of contracting, swine influenza. Incoming passengers from affected areas are being monitored, but no flights into New Zealand have been cancelled.

We encourage those with plans to come to New Zealand for studies to follow through on those plans. For those with clients or family members currently in New Zealand, please be assured that the government is taking this issue seriously and we are looking after the well-being of all students in the country.

The most up-to-date statements about the situation in New Zealand can be found on the Ministry of Health website: www.moh.govt.nz. For students who are concerned about their health, there is a toll free phone number on the Ministry's website which they can call for further information and guidance.

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