

National Infectious Disease Alert Level Raised from BLUE to YELLOW Upon Confirmation of MERS Patient in ROK

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□ In response to the confirmation of a MERS patient in the Republic of Korea (ROK), the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) raised the national infectious disease alert level from BLUE to YELLOW following a risk assessment meeting presided by the Director of the Center for Public Health Emergency and Response on the evening of September 8th.

○ Central IMS was established within the KCDC to actively monitor and prevent further spread of MERS.

* Alert level criteria: BLUE (MERS case(s) abroad with no immediate threat of importation to ROK) – YELLOW (domestic importation of MERS from abroad) – ORANGE (confined spread of MERS within the country) - RED (spread of MERS in communities across the country)

○ All 17 major administrative cities and provinces province across the country were notified of the raise in alert level, and local IMS were assembled accordingly in each division.

□ KCDC is working closely with the Seoul Metropolitan Government in conducting movement and contact tracking of the confirmed patient following his arrival in ROK. As of now, 21 close contacts of the patient have been confirmed, an increase of 1 individual since the previous report on September 8th.

○ Currently, contacts of the patient have been placed in isolation and are being closely monitored, and this process will continue until the end of the 14-day incubation period following the time of initial contact.

○ Movement tracking confirmed that the patient was transported from Samsung Medical Center to Seoul National University Hospital using a negative pressure isolation ambulance from Gangnam Public Health Center, with the driver using the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Upon arriving at Seoul National University Hospital, medical staff also used the appropriate PPE when treating the patient.

○ The names and information of other contacts, including the 440 individuals on the same flight as the patient, have been provided to local government agencies, and passive surveillance is being conducted.

* Passive surveillance: Over the course of the 14-day incubation period, public health centers

in each respective jurisdiction contact individuals regularly (five times) by phone and text to monitor their health and provide necessary information upon any signs and symptoms of possible infection.

- CCTV analysis and contact tracking are also being conducted to confirm any other potential contacts of the patient in the airport or over the course of his movement. As such, the number of total contacts is subject to change.

- The confirmed patient reported symptoms of diarrhea to the stationed quarantine officers, but did not show other signs of MERS, such as fever or respiratory problems. An ear thermometer showed a normal body temperature of 36.3°C, and the patient was not treated as a suspected MERS case.

- The quarantine officers at Incheon International Airport advised the confirmed patient to call the KCDC 1339 Call Center immediately in the case of developing a fever or any other symptoms of MERS and provided him with educational materials on MERS prevention.

- KCDC is working closely with the Seoul Metropolitan Government and other local government agencies to track any potential contacts and prevent further spread of MERS.

- Individuals visiting the Middle East are advised to wash their hands frequently and maintain proper personal hygiene, refrain from visiting local farms, avoid contact with camels or consumption of camel meat and milk, and only visit local hospitals and medical facilities if absolutely necessary.

- After traveling abroad, individuals are asked to cooperate by completing the provided health questionnaire upon arrival in ROK. Individuals who experience fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other possible symptoms of MERS should not visit hospitals directly. Instead, they are asked to call the KCDC 1339 Call Center to report their symptoms and follow instructions accordingly.

- Medical professionals are advised to confirm the travel history of individuals admitted with respiratory symptoms, using the Drug Utilization Review (DUR) for Korean nationals and through direct questioning for foreign nationals. Any suspected MERS cases should be reported to the district public health center or to the KCDC 1339 Call Center.

* Additional information on the current situation will be provided upon further epidemiological investigation to ensure rapid, accurate, and transparent communication with the public.