

News Release

Contact: Jennifer Sizemore
(702) 383-1225

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Suspected SARS case investigated in Clark County

(Las Vegas, Nev., - April 14, 2003) – Today the Clark County Health District and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began investigating a suspect case of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in an adult patient who presented with a low-grade fever and cough. The patient is not seriously ill and did not require hospitalization, however did recently travel to an Asian country with documented cases.

Due to patient confidentiality the patient's name, age, sex and other identifying information cannot be released. All cases are subject to reclassification if further investigation provides a known cause of illness or reveals deviations from the case definition.

“At this time in our investigation this illness meets the minimum threshold of the CDC case definition. We will continue to investigate this case and follow all precautions as outlined by CDC,” said Dr. Donald Kwalick, chief health officer for the health district.

Currently the CDC is recommending that persons meeting the case definition use isolation precautions until 10 days after resolution of fever if their cough is improving. Additionally close contacts will be interviewed and monitored by the health district for illness.

Following is the CDC case definition of SARS:

Respiratory illness of unknown etiology with onset since February 1, 2003, and the following criteria:

- Measured temperature greater than 100.4° F (greater than 38° C) **AND**
- One or more clinical findings of respiratory illness (e.g. cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, hypoxia, or radiographic findings of either pneumonia or acute respiratory distress syndrome) **AND**
- Travel† within 10 days of onset of symptoms to an area with documented or suspected community transmission of SARS (see list below; excludes areas with secondary cases limited to healthcare workers or direct household contacts) **OR**

Close contact* within 10 days of onset of symptoms with either a person with a respiratory illness who traveled to a SARS area or a person known to be a suspect SARS case.

(more)

† **Travel** includes transit in an airport in an area with documented or suspected community transmission of SARS.

***Close contact** is defined as having cared for, having lived with, or having direct contact with respiratory secretions and/or body fluids of a patient known to be suspect SARS case.

Areas with documented or suspected community transmission of SARS: Peoples' Republic of China (i.e., mainland China and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region); Hanoi, Vietnam; and Singapore

People experiencing unexplained respiratory illness, and who meet ALL of the above criteria, should seek medical attention and should inform their health care provider about their recent travel or possible exposure to the disease.

The health district is emphasizing this is a common time of year for respiratory illness and the distinguishing feature of SARS is travel to an area with documented cases.

Health care providers should report any cases meeting the case definition of SARS to the Clark County Health District Office of Epidemiology at 383-1378.

####