

April 8, 2022

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear CDC:

I am writing in regard to the spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza A (HPAI) H5N1 in wild birds, commercial poultry, and backyard flocks in the United States, and associated human exposures to HPAI A(H5N1) virus. This urgent and evolving public health threat emerged in the US in January 2022. One human infection with a HPAI A(H5N1) virus was detected in an individual in the United Kingdom who raised domesticated ducks that had been found to be infected with HPAI A(H5N1) virus; it was the same lineage as the viruses currently circulating in wild birds and poultry in the United States. The potential for human infection with this virus remains unknown, but there are ongoing human exposures to infected birds. Outbreaks have been reported in poultry or backyard flocks in 25 states, and more states have conducted symptom monitoring of their residents who traveled to outbreaks to aid in a response. Therefore, monitoring for HPAI A(H5N1) infection among exposed individuals will require a coordinated multi-state and jurisdictional investigation, as well as specialized assistance and resources to adequately respond. The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) strongly supports a centrally coordinated multi-state and jurisdictional investigation of HPAI A(H5N1) and recommends multi-state technical assistance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

A multi-state coordinated investigation to HPAI A(H5N1) will assist each state/local/territory jurisdiction in making rapid, practical decisions for actions to prevent and control the public health problem. This approach will streamline and strengthen the response, as opposed to multiple state and jurisdictional investigations independently addressing HPAI H5N1 monitoring and risk assessment.

Each jurisdiction participating in the multi-jurisdictional response would retain ownership of and is responsible for all data collected within their state.

Sincerely,



Janet Hamilton, MPH
Executive Director
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists