

# ORR State Letter

---

# 05 - 28

**Date:** September 28, 2005

---

TO: STATE REFUGEE COORDINATORS  
STATE REFUGEE HEALTH COORDINATORS  
NATIONAL VOLUNTARY AGENCIES  
MUTUAL ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATIONS  
OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

FROM: Nguyen Van Hanh, Ph.D.  
Director  
Office of Refugee Resettlement

SUBJECT: Avian Flu

This message is intended for broad circulation among the refugee network, including state refugee coordinators, state refugee health coordinators, voluntary agencies and their local affiliates, mutual assistance associations, and local health providers who offer refugee services, and organizations that work with unaccompanied alien children and victims of trafficking.

Reported cases of Avian Flu (H5N1) in **Vietnam, Thailand** and **Cambodia** have resulted in the deaths of approximately 65 people to date. Humans have acquired Avian Flu from close contact with infected domestic fowl (chicken, ducks, geese). **There have *not* been any confirmed cases of human-to-human transmission of Avian Flu to date.**

Refugees that originate from these Southeast Asian countries currently are being inspected for flu-like symptoms three days before departure for the U.S. If they display symptoms, they are not allowed to travel until symptoms resolve.

Avian Flu has a three- to five-day incubation period; therefore, it is possible for refugees to display symptoms soon after arrival in the U.S. that were not displayed overseas. If a refugee from one of these countries arrives in the U.S. and exhibits flu-like symptoms, it is important to establish whether he/she had contact with domestic fowl, and for the local resettlement agency to escort him/her to the refugee health assessment program or local health department as soon as possible. State refugee health coordinators should be mindful of flu-like symptoms in refugees arriving from these countries and follow patients with flu-like symptoms to ensure proper treatment is administered.

Unaccompanied alien children and victims of trafficking should be evaluated for flu-like symptoms by health professionals. Individuals displaying symptoms, who are likely to have had contact with infected fowl, should be identified and observed to assure proper treatment is administered.

ORR is working on a plan to prepare for a possible outbreak of Avian Flu. In the next few weeks, you will hear about the plans and preparation activities and have an opportunity to comment and participate.

If you would like more information on Avian Flu, please access the CDC website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/>. For specific questions on refugees and Avian Flu, please contact Marta Brenden (ORR) at (202) 205-3589 or Dr. David Smith (OGHA) at (301) 675-1920.