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CDC HEALTH ADVISORY

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Outbreak Notice: Respiratory Illness in Long-term Care Facility in British Columbia, Canada: August 14, 2003

Health authorities in British Columbia, Canada have released information about an outbreak of acute respiratory illness in a residential care facility for the elderly in North Surrey. The outbreak has involved 97 residents and 46 staff members since July 3, 2003. A small number of the patients involved in the outbreak have had preliminary test results indicating a virus similar to SARS coronavirus. However, the illness in most of the patients has been mild (i.e., cold-like symptoms) in contrast to the typical illness of patients with SARS. Most of the residents and staff have fully recovered. Seven residents have died since July 3. Four of these deaths appear to be unrelated to the outbreak, whereas pneumonia was a contributing factor in the others. (Additional information is available on the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control website -- www.bccdc.org.)

Further testing and investigation is underway. The outbreak appears to be waning, and control measures are in place.

No precautions for U.S. travelers are recommended at this time. CDC is in close contact with health authorities in Canada and the World Health Organization, and information will be updated as it becomes available.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES