

US medics boost infectious disease response

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Medical experts from the United States Pacific Command (PACOM) team are working with the National Emerging Infectious Disease Coordination Office (NEIDCO) to improve the capacity of health experts in Laos to detect, respond to and contain infectious diseases.

A four day training course is currently running in Vientiane to enhance the disease surveillance capacity of specialists from the Military Medical Department and the Ministry of Health in laboratory and epidemiology concepts of

The recent outbreak of influenza continues to expand around the world, posing a threat to countries' socio-economic development efforts, including Laos, said Dr Bounlay.

"To prevent this virus spreading to Laos we have to enhance surveillance in hospitals around the country," he said.

The workshop is a great opportunity for experts from provincial hospitals in Champassak, Savannakhet, Xieng Khuang and Vientiane and the capital and PACOM team experts to share their experiences and boost surveillance capacity and

the domestic and international level, said Mr Huso.

He said the US government is willing to provide assistance with any activities aimed at preventing diseases in Laos, especially the A/H1N1 virus.

The PACOM team is organised by the Office of International Health at Thirteenth Air Force from Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii, USA. Supporting the team with disease surveillance expertise is the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences from Bangkok, Thailand.

The visiting team is being supported by the United States



Dr Bounlay Phommasack (centre) speaks at the workshop in Vientiane yesterday.

disease surveillance.

The opening of the workshop took place yesterday and was attended by NEIDCO Director Dr Bounlay Phommasack, and the United States of America's Ambassador to Laos Ravic Huso.

responses to the A/H1N1 virus should it occur in Laos, said Dr Bounlay.

Preventing the virus spreading and infecting people in Laos requires greater coordination from many different sectors at both

Embassy to Laos.

The programme is made possible through the generous support of the Armed Forces Health Surveillance Centre, Department of Defence Global Emerging Infections and Response Systems.