



## SARS Pneumonia Cases Are Increasing and Singapore Orders Quarantines

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**March 24, 2003 Atlanta, Georgia** - Today the World Health Organization reports that 13 countries have now reported 456 cases of SARS and 17 deaths (the numbers go higher if 305 cases in Guandong Province, China from February 2003 are included). The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in the United States is now reporting 39 suspected cases in 18 states. Today, fourteen new cases of SARS were reported in Singapore, bringing the new total to 65. Twelve patients are in serious condition in intensive care.

The Singapore government on Monday announced 740 people there might have been exposed to SARS patients and ordered them to stay quarantined in their homes for the next ten days. This is the first time Singapore's Infectious Diseases Act has been applied and is the largest government-ordered quarantine since the mysterious SARS pneumonia emerged in February to March 2003. Any quarantined person caught outside their home will face a monetary fine as high as \$2,825 U. S.

In addition to investigations of the *Paramyxo* virus, CDC announced today that "a previously unrecognized virus from the *Corona virus* family is now a leading candidate for the viral cause of the SARS pneumonia syndrome.

Corona viruses are named because their shape is like a sun with rays. Discovered in the 1960s, France's Laboratory of Human and Molecular Virology reported in 1998 that in human medicine Corona viruses can cause colds and might be implicated in Multiple Sclerosis, Necrotizing Enterocolitis and Lower Respiratory Tract Infections, particularly in infants. But the biology of these RNA viruses is complex and poorly understood.

SARS is an acronym for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, an atypical pneumonia that rapidly attacks alveoli lung tissue. CDC confirms that:

"Some of the individuals with the severe SARS pneumonia and death have been relatively healthy, middle-aged people, and that tells us that this is a disease that can be virulent and life-threatening, even among those who are otherwise probably immunologically healthy. ...Further, the high attack rate in health care workers caring for the early hospitalized patients ... suggests that it is certainly contagious."

### United States

Suspected SARS pneumonia cases in the United States have climbed to 39 in 18 states.

California 10  
Connecticut 1  
Hawaii 3  
Illinois 1  
Maine 1  
Massachusetts 1  
Michigan 2  
Missouri 2

Mississippi 1  
New Jersey 1  
New Mexico 1  
North Carolina 2  
New York 5  
Pennsylvania 1  
Rhode Island 1  
Texas 3  
Utah 1  
Virginia 2

Total Suspected U. S. Cases Under Investigation: 39

### Worldwide:

Canada 11  
China (Guangdong Province, February 2003) 305  
France 1  
Germany 4  
Hong Kong 260  
Italy 2  
Republic of Ireland 1  
Singapore 65  
Spain 1  
Switzerland 2  
Taiwan, China 6  
Thailand 5  
United Kingdom 3  
Viet Nam 58

Total Worldwide (excluding Guangdong Province's 305): 456 and 17 deaths

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### **Websites:**

<http://www.who.int/en/> (World Health Organization)

<http://www.cdc.gov/> (Centers for Disease Control)

### **Credits**

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