

Health Update:

Update 6: Important Changes Related to Novel Influenza A H1N1 Testing Performed By the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory

June 9, 2009

This document will be updated as new information becomes available. The current version can always be viewed at <http://www.dhss.mo.gov>

The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) is now using 4 types of documents to provide important information to medical and public health professionals, and to other interested persons:

Health Alerts convey information of the highest level of importance which warrants immediate action or attention from Missouri health providers, emergency responders, public health agencies or the public.

Health Advisories provide important information for a specific incident or situation, including that impacting neighboring states; may not require immediate action.

Health Guidances contain comprehensive information pertaining to a particular disease or condition, and include recommendations, guidelines, etc. endorsed by DHSS.

Health Updates provide new or updated information on an incident or situation; can also provide information to update a previously sent Health Alert, Health Advisory, or Health Guidance; unlikely to require immediate action.

Health Update
June 9, 2009

**FROM: MARGARET T. DONNELLY
DIRECTOR**

**SUBJECT: Update 6: Important Changes Related to Novel
Influenza A H1N1 Testing Performed By the
Missouri State Public Health Laboratory**

Over the past couple of months the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory (MSPHL) has been conducting surveillance for the Novel Influenza A (H1N1) virus by performing polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing on patients with influenza-like illness (ILI) to develop a better understanding of the epidemiology of this disease. As more has been learned, the testing strategies have changed from a broader to a more focused testing structure. The testing protocols that have been employed have been based on direction from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as local and state information. In the previous Health Update, testing had been reduced to performing tests only on persons hospitalized with an ILI. This would allow the CDC and state health departments to have a better understanding of the epidemiology of Novel Influenza A (H1N1) infection. This Health Update is to inform you that the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), in collaboration with the CDC, has decided to stop requesting information on individual Novel Influenza A (H1N1) cases, including those in special groups, such as pregnant women, health care workers, or hospitalized persons. With this information, along with the fact that approximately 77 percent of all isolates (CDC data) of influenza A are currently Novel Influenza A (H1N1), DHSS will return to a testing protocol that is consistent with seasonal influenza practices and will no longer be accepting routine specimens for Novel H1N1 testing.

Novel H1N1 PCR testing will be performed only under the following circumstances:

1. The SPHL will *only test* sentinel provider specimens; and
2. Those specimens submitted for epidemiological investigation purposes (e.g., as identification of a respiratory disease that hasn't been diagnosed and is part of an outbreak being investigated by the state or local health departments).

The Sentinel Providers will be returning to traditional testing for the off-season. The expectation is for us to receive a total of 3 specimens from each provider for the period June – October 1, 2009 and for the sentinel providers to submit their weekly office data to the national sentinel provider data base.

In situations other than those listed in 1 and 2, health care providers who wish individual patient testing can do so through commercial laboratories.

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The MSPHL will routinely batch and test influenza specimens every Thursday except in outbreak situations.

All medical providers should immediately report any observed clusters or outbreaks of febrile influenza-like illness to the local public health agency (LPHA), or to DHSS at 800-392-0272 (24 hours a day – 7 days a week).

More information for Missouri medical providers is available on the DHSS Swine Influenza website, at: http://www.dhss.mo.gov/BT_Response/_MedProfs.html.

Questions should be directed to the LPHA, or to DHSS's Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention at 573/751-6113, or 866-628-9891.