



Pat Quinn, Governor  
Damon T. Arnold, M.D., M.P.H., Director

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## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Local Health Departments and Hospitals; Departments of Critical Care, Emergency Medicine, Family Practice, Geriatrics, Internal Medicine, Infectious Disease, Infection Control, Pediatrics, Pharmacy, Neonatal Units, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pulmonary Medicine and Laboratory Medicine.

**FROM:** Karen McMahon, Immunization Section Chief  
Craig S. Conover, MD, MPH, OHP Medical Director

**DATE:** September 10, 2010

**RE:** Illinois Department of Public Health - Interim Influenza Testing and Reporting Guidance

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The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is issuing updated guidance related to submission of laboratory specimens and reporting. Influenza surveillance would not be possible without the help of clinicians and infection control practitioners and laboratories, and we thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

### **A. Influenza Testing at IDPH Division of Laboratories**

**Influenza testing performed for inpatient and outpatient clinical care, including PCR testing, should be obtained at clinical and hospital laboratories.** Effective 9/10/10, only the following specimens shall be sent to IDPH for influenza testing<sup>1</sup>:

1. Specimens that are approved by the [local health department](#) on a case by case basis (e.g. for outbreak management in a congregate facility, post-mortem evaluation, cases of suspected animal to human transmission of influenza virus).
2. Specimens that cannot be subtyped (e.g. PCR testing is performed and is negative for currently circulating strains of H1 and H3).

Information regarding availability of PCR testing at clinical and hospital laboratories is

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<sup>1</sup> These criteria do not apply to IDPH-designated influenza sentinel surveillance providers, who will receive separate instructions regarding specimen submission.

attached. All submissions to IDPH for influenza laboratory testing require pre-approval from the local health department, and use of the respiratory influenza testing requisition form, available at [http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/laboratories/manual/app\\_L.pdf](http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/laboratories/manual/app_L.pdf) .

## **B. Interim guidance for reporting of influenza**

The clinical and epidemiologic characteristics of H1N1 2009 influenza have been extensively evaluated and as a result, surveillance efforts are transitioning toward a more traditional model. The major objectives of influenza surveillance during 2010-2011 are to describe risk factors for and burden of severe illness, provide information for management of situations requiring public health intervention (e.g. prophylaxis in a congregate care facility), identifying changes in the severity and epidemiology of influenza, and to identify novel strains.

Reporting requirements are therefore revised as follows:

### **Report the following to the local health department:**

1. **Suspected novel influenza** (e.g severe respiratory illness of unknown etiology associated with recent international travel).

--Reportable immediately, within 3 hours.

*Note: H1N1 2009 influenza is not currently considered to be a novel influenza strain for surveillance purposes.*

2. **Pediatric influenza-associated deaths**: defined as death of an individual < 18 years of age resulting from a clinically compatible illness that is confirmed to be influenza by culture, PCR, commercial rapid influenza, or other appropriate diagnostic test.

--Reportable as soon as possible, within 7 days.

3. **Influenza –associated intensive care unit hospitalizations**: defined as individuals hospitalized in an ICU with a positive laboratory test for influenza A or B, including specimens identified as influenza A/H3N2, A/H1N1, A/H1N1(2009) and specimens not subtyped (e.g. influenza positive cases by PCR or any rapid test such as EIA).

--Reportable as soon as possible, within 24 hours.<sup>2</sup>

4. **Outbreaks of influenza or influenza like illness in a congregate setting** (e.g. correctional or long term care facility). Additional information regarding reporting of outbreaks of influenza and influenza- like illness in congregate settings will be provided under separate cover.

As of October 1, 2010, I-NEDSS will contain three different case-based modules (novel influenza, pediatric influenza-associated deaths and influenza- associated ICU hospitalization) for influenza reporting. Please be sure to enter cases into the proper

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<sup>2</sup> Such cases are reportable under the [Communicable Disease Code, Section 690.295](#) as any unusual case that may indicate a public health hazard.

module. For female patients in the ICU, please make certain to indicate pregnancy/postpartum status. If updated information for any patient becomes available after the initial report (e.g. results of a PCR test, death), please update the I-NEDSS report. Influenza reports for other individuals should no longer be entered into I-NEDSS, unless requested by the local health department.

IDPH will publish the first weekly influenza surveillance report of the 2010-2011 season (week 40, week ending October 9, 2010) on October 15, 2010. IDPH reports will be available at <http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate09-10.htm>. Influenza surveillance reports are also available on many local health department websites.

If you have any questions about influenza surveillance, please contact IDPH at 217-785-1455, or your local health department.

## PCR Testing for Influenza

Points of contact to arrange a billing account, specimen shipping, etc., for influenza PCR testing are listed below. Testing protocols vary by laboratory (e.g., not every lab performs sub-typing). Laboratories are listed in alphabetical order; IDPH does not endorse any particular laboratory. This list may be incomplete; it is based on currently available information and will be updated periodically. To add the name of a laboratory to this list, please contact Bernard Johnson at [Bernard.Johnson@Illinois.gov](mailto:Bernard.Johnson@Illinois.gov) or at (217) 782-6562.

Lab	Contact	Phone
ACL Laboratories	Sales	800-877-7016
Alverno Clinical Laboratories, LLC	Melissa Mace	219-989-3888
Marshfield Labs	Sandra Molter	800-222-5835, x16278
Mayo Medical Laboratories	Customer Service	800-533-1710
North Shore University Health System	Brian Staes	847-663-2105
Northwestern Memorial Hospital	Angie Bialkowski-Gunn	312-926-4296
Quest Diagnostics	Customer Service	866- 697-8378
University of Illinois	Jessica Badilla	312-996-4800