



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

825 North Rutledge Street • Springfield, Illinois 62702-4910 • www.idph.state.il.us

09/14/2009

Information Update on Specimen Submission and Testing for Influenza
Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)
Division of Laboratories

IDPH laboratories provide influenza testing in support of the Department's surveillance activities. Resources have been made available by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for testing specimens for selected patients to track seasonal influenza strains and novel influenza strains.

Objectives of the surveillance are:

- Determination of circulating influenza viruses for the purpose of yearly vaccine strain recommendations.
- Detecting genetic drift and/or shift in influenza strains and early detection of novel influenza viruses with pandemic potential.
- Detecting and monitoring antiviral resistance.

At this time, IDPH laboratories are testing respiratory specimens from individuals with acute febrile respiratory illness who are hospitalized, recently deceased, and certain individuals of interest to Local Health Department investigations. Acceptable specimen criteria may change. Refer to internet site http://www.idph.state.il.us/h1n1_flu/index.htm (Link "Health Care Providers") for current information on specimen acceptance criteria, collection, and submission forms. Patient specimens for influenza testing that do not meet acceptance criteria must be sent to a private laboratory. A list of private laboratories offering PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) testing is attached and also available at the above link.

Hospitals (for inpatient testing only), coroners and medical examiners, and Local Health Departments may obtain specimen collection kits, shipping instructions and submission forms by contacting the IDPH Springfield laboratory Shipping Unit by phone (217) 524-6222, by fax at (217) 524-7924, or by emailing DPH.LabImprovement@Illinois.gov. All submitters will be responsible for packaging and shipping their specimens to IDPH Laboratories.

Specimens meeting submission criteria may be sent to the IDPH Springfield laboratory (217-782-6562), the IDPH Chicago laboratory (312-793-4760), or the IDPH Carbondale laboratory (618-457-5131). Specimens not meeting the criteria for public health testing will be deemed unacceptable. A report will be issued stating that the specimen is unacceptable for testing.

Questions on IDPH laboratory testing may be directed to Bernard (Tom) Johnson, Chief, Division of Laboratories, at (217) 782-6562 or Bernard.Johnson@Illinois.gov.

Improving public health, one community at a time

printed on recycled paper