

Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Preparation List for Clinical Laboratories

The MDCH Bureau of Laboratories will be providing limited case identification (patient-specific) testing this flu season. When our capacity has been exceeded, an approval process will be instituted. We realize any approval process will complicate the submission of specimens, and we will only institute it when our capacity or reagent supplies are outstripped. We will send out a communication alerting you when we plan on initiating an approval process. Please refer to the Laboratory Novel H1N1 (Swine) Influenza Page on the MDCH BOL web site (www.michigan.gov/mdchlab) for information and guidelines on the approval process once implementation is imminent.

This list of key points was developed to assist you in your preparations for the fall wave of the novel influenza A pandemic.

Things Your Lab Should Do Now:

- Identify a laboratory, other than the state lab, that is doing novel influenza PCR **diagnostic** testing **IF** testing is needed. **CDC indicates it is not necessary to test everyone with ILI.**
 - Risk groups where testing may be needed include hospitalized patients with severe influenza-like illness (ILI), patients with an ILI of an unusual presentation, pregnant women with severe ILI, outbreaks or clusters of ILI in congregate settings, immunocompromised patients with ILI, and influenza-related deaths of individuals of any age. These are groups that we will target in our case identification testing.
 - We have worked with clinical laboratory partners in the state to expand the availability of diagnostic testing in the private sector for patient populations that public health has not targeted.
- Print and read the CDC BioSafety Guidelines (http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidelines_labworkers.htm) for handling clinical specimens or isolates containing novel influenza A (H1N1) including vaccine strains. Salient points:
 - Rapid Tests performed in the laboratory and non-laboratory setting which do not have a step that could generate aerosols require only splash protection, including lab coat, gloves, eye protection (goggles) and face mask (a splash shield providing protection for the entire face may be determined to provide the protection of eye protection and facemask). This requirement includes physician office laboratories and Emergency Departments.
 - Rapid tests that have a step such as vortexing which creates an aerosol should be conducted in a Biological Safety Level-2 (BSL-2) laboratory within a Biological Safety Cabinet (BSC).
 - Diagnostic and research testing should be conducted in a BSL-2 laboratory, utilizing a Class II BSC that is certified annually for all specimen manipulation with the potential for aerosol production. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should include lab coat, gloves and Class II BSC.

- Inventory your specimen collection supplies, including those for the MDCH lab. Check expiration dates and replace any expired items. Consider adding to your stockpile. Consider adding supplies to create your own specimen collection kits, if needed.
- Inventory your packaging and shipping supplies, including those for the MDCH lab.
- Become familiar with the 2009-2010 MDCH Influenza Test Algorithm.
www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/2009-2010_Influenza_Algorithm_289121_7.pdf
Note: these guidelines may be updated as the season progresses.
- Insure you have a sufficient number of laboratory/microbiology staff registered on the Health Alert Network (HAN) to receive MDCH alerts. Remind registered individuals to forward HAN messages to others within your facility. Update your HAN alerting profile, and review procedures for verifying receipt of phone alerts.
- Bookmark web pages you will need to find the most current information on the novel influenza outbreak. Check these pages frequently for updates.
 - MDCH Lab main page www.michigan.gov/mdchlab
 - MDCH Epi flu page www.michigan.gov/flu
 - CDC Novel flu page www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/
- Bookmark web pages you will need for submission of samples to MDCH.
 - MDCH test request form www.michigan.gov/documents/DCH-0583TEST_REQUEST_7587_7.pdf
 - MDCH sample collection instructions www.michigan.gov/documents/DCH-0772_7497_7.pdf
- Review the most recent guidance on rapid flu testing.
 - CDC guidance www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/rapid_testing.htm
 - MDCH guidance www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/H1N1_Rapid_Testing_Health_Care_Provider_289106_7.doc
- Gather phone and contact information for your local health department and your regional LRN laboratory.

Things Your Lab Should Know:

- Be aware that rapid influenza testing can only detect novel H1N1 at high viral titers. The August 7 Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR. 58(30); 826-9) highlights the overall sensitivity of these tests at 40-60%. Sensitivity for seasonal influenza A is 60-80% for H1N1 and 80-83% for H3N2. Therefore, **a negative rapid flu test does NOT rule out influenza infection with the novel H1N1 virus and should be interpreted with caution.** Also, rapid tests do not differentiate between subtypes of influenza A, some do not differentiate between influenza A and B, and others do not detect influenza B virus at all.
- Sick staff should stay home and not report to work. All personnel should self monitor daily for signs and symptoms of febrile respiratory illness. Staff who develop these symptoms should be instructed not to report to work, or if at work, should cease patient care activities and notify their supervisor. Be sure to align

your sick leave policies so ill staff can stay home. Sick staff should stay home until 24 hours after their fever has subsided without being on anti-pyretic medications.

Next Steps:

- Get your flu shots – all three of them! Seasonal influenza shots should be available early fall prior to novel influenza vaccinations. The novel influenza vaccination will probably require two doses.
- The MDCH Bureau of Laboratories is planning a conference call with our clinical partners to answer questions and hear your concerns. The call will be held twice so you may select the date and time that works best for your facility. You do NOT need to attend both sessions as the same information will be covered in each.
 - September 10, 2009 at 11 A.M.
 - September 14, 2009 at 2 P.M.

Call in information:

- Call in number: 1-877-873-8017
- access code: 3932212