



MLS: Laboratory Update
Testing for Tick-Borne Diseases Survey
April 8, 2009



****Please forward this to all appropriate personnel within your institution****

This is a routine message from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Minnesota Laboratory System (MLS). This message is being sent to MLS laboratory contacts serving Minnesota residents. You are not required to reply to this message.

NOTE: The Minnesota Laboratory System email address has changed to: mnlabssystem@state.mn.us

We Need Your Assistance

To gain a better understanding of the availability of testing for Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases in Minnesota, we are conducting a brief online survey. This is a screening survey to determine the number of labs in Minnesota that perform testing for tick-borne diseases. Labs that perform in-house testing for any tick-borne disease may be asked for more detailed information in coming months. Your participation is very important. After compiling and analyzing the survey data, we will be reporting our findings back to you, so that you are aware of where testing is available in Minnesota.

Background

Various tick-borne pathogens cause disease in humans in Minnesota or other areas of North America. These tick-borne diseases include Lyme disease (*Borrelia burgdorferi*), human anaplasmosis (*Anaplasma phagocytophilum*), human ehrlichiosis (*Ehrlichia* spp.), babesiosis (*Babesia microti* and other *Babesia* spp.), Rocky Mountain spotted fever (*Rickettsia rickettsii*), other rickettsioses (*Rickettsia* spp.), tularemia (*Francisella tularensis*), and Powassan encephalitis (Powassan virus). Depending on the disease, laboratory methods to aid in diagnosis of these diseases include serologic tests, blood smear, immunohistochemistry, PCR, culture methods, and animal inoculation. While we believe that much of this tick-borne testing is performed by large commercial labs, smaller labs may also conduct some tick-borne disease testing. For instance, for Lyme disease, hospital labs might perform the EIA and then refer the specimen to a reference laboratory for Western blot. This survey will assist in the understanding of how and where testing is being performed.

To Take the Survey

We estimate the total time needed to complete the survey is less than 10 minutes. Please complete the survey by Friday April 24, 2009. To access the survey, click on the link below or cut and paste the entire address into your web browser:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/phl/survey/tickbornetesting2009.htm>

If you have questions regarding the survey or prefer to conduct the survey by telephone, please contact Melissa Kemperman at 651-201-5077. We appreciate your time and assistance in helping us develop a better understanding of tick-borne disease laboratory testing practices and for supporting tick-borne disease efforts in Minnesota.

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