MLS: Laboratory Update
Weekly MLS Laboratory Influenza Surveillance-Starting Soon
September 17, 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. PLEASE REPLY as indicated below. We apologize if you are receiving this more than once.

Influenza MLS Laboratory Surveillance –Weekly data
Please consider joining the MLS Weekly Laboratory Influenza Surveillance program, an important program that tracks influenza laboratory testing results on a weekly basis so that healthcare professionals can monitor influenza. Data submitted from labs will be posted weekly on the MDH Weekly Influenza Activity website http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/stats/index.html

Quick and Easy On-line Data Entry
Once per week, your laboratory will input MINIMAL influenza testing data via a SIMPLE web-based system. Data requested will include the number of rapid influenza and RSV samples tested per week and the number of positives of each, including PCR results (if performed at your facility). If your laboratory performs virology culture, then you would also report on number of respiratory/influenza and RSV cultures performed and the number of positives. Feedback from laboratories that participated last year indicated that the process was QUICK and EASY.

Why Should Your Lab Participate?
The more laboratories that participate, the more ROBUST the data will be. You will be able to follow the progression of influenza in your region as well as around the state by viewing the weekly updated data on the MDH Weekly Influenza Activity website. Since the positive predictive value of rapid influenza tests relies on prevalence of disease in the community, your testing information will PROVIDE your clinicians with VALUABLE guidance for interpretation of rapid influenza results.

How Does Your Lab Participate?
Simply REPLY to this message with the name of your LABORATORY, the NAME, PHONE NUMBER and EMAIL ADDRESS of the individual in your lab that we can contact with further details.

THANK YOU for your assistance with Minnesota's laboratory influenza surveillance and your continued support of the MLS.

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