



MLS: Laboratory Update

Most 2010-2011 Influenza Surveillance Programs Ending

May 16, 2011

Purpose of this Message:

This message serves to inform the healthcare community that MDH surveillance for hospitalized influenza cases and influenza-related deaths for the 2010-2011 influenza season will be ending; and to inform about the limited influenza surveillance that will continue throughout the summer. To print a pdf version of this message go to: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/phl/mls/alerts.html#2011>

Included in this Update:

1. Official End of Influenza Reporting and Specimen Submission for Hospitalized Cases and Influenza-related Deaths for the 2010-2011 Influenza Season
2. Some MDH Influenza Surveillance Activities Continue
3. MLS Weekly Laboratory Influenza Surveillance – Update
4. MDH Influenza Surveillance Planning for the Upcoming 2011-2012 Influenza Season

1. Official End of Influenza Reporting and Specimen Submission for Hospitalized Cases and Influenza-related Deaths for the 2010-2011 Influenza Season

Although we continue to see a small number of hospitalized influenza cases and influenza-related deaths, MDH is officially ending surveillance activities for hospitalized influenza cases and surveillance for influenza-related deaths for the 2010-2011 influenza season. **After May 22nd, you will no longer be asked to submit reports (e.g. yellow disease report card, fax, telephone call, etc.) for hospitalized, laboratory-confirmed influenza cases.**

To allow for continued characterization of circulating influenza strains throughout the summer months, the MDH Public Health Laboratory (MDH-PHL) has slightly modified specimen submission requirements for hospitalized patients with influenza-like illness (also known as project #1492). **MDH-PHL is no longer performing routine surveillance testing on hospitalized patients with ILI, however, if your laboratory is performing PCR or viral culture for influenza, MDH-PHL is requesting that you submit samples and/or isolates POSITIVE for influenza from hospitalized patients, for further characterization.** Rapid influenza testing is not recommended during periods of low incidence of disease, therefore MDH is NOT requesting specimen submission for rapid influenza positive specimens.

2. Some MDH Influenza Surveillance Activities Continue

Please continue to report unusual case incidence (clusters and suspect novel strains - 2009 H1N1 is no longer considered a novel strain). If you identify an unusual cluster or suspect a novel strain, please contact MDH Epidemiology at (651) 201-5214 to discuss options for influenza testing at MDH-PHL.

Although your institution is not generally involved in these types of MDH influenza surveillance activities, sentinel site influenza surveillance (clinics) and influenza-like illness surveillance in schools and long-term care facilities will continue beyond May 22nd.

Laboratory characterization of specimens positive for influenza PCR and/or viral culture in hospitalized patients will continue at MDH-PHL through the summer. See #1 above.

3. MLS Weekly Laboratory Influenza Surveillance – Update

Thank you to the more than 100 laboratories that submitted influenza and RSV data throughout the 2010-2011 Influenza Season. **The last date for submitting Weekly Laboratory Influenza Surveillance data will be Monday, May 23rd (week #20).** However, MDH-PHL will be inviting influenza PCR and virology culture laboratories that are interested, to continue providing data throughout the summer. Those laboratories will be contacted via a separate email.

4. MDH Influenza Surveillance Planning for the Upcoming 2011-2012 Influenza Season

During the summer, MDH influenza surveillance coordinators will be meeting to develop new strategies for influenza surveillance for the next influenza season. In September 2011, we will be providing you (our partners) with new influenza surveillance and testing guidance. Surveillance for the 2011-2012 influenza season is expected to begin on October 2, 2011.

Results of the data gathered from various MDH influenza surveillance programs can be found on the MDH Weekly Influenza Activity webpage:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/stats/index.html>

Data from these programs are collected and displayed weekly during the influenza season.

If you have any questions about influenza reporting please contact MDH Epidemiology at 651-201-5414.

If you have questions about specimen submission or laboratory testing, please contact Dave Boxrud, Molecular Epidemiology Supervisor at 651-201-5257.

Thank you for your partnership and continued support of influenza surveillance efforts in Minnesota.

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