



**MLS Influenza Laboratory Update #2  
First Influenza Isolate of the Season Confirmed as Influenza A  
October 13, 2011**

**Purpose of this Message:**

This message is to inform the healthcare community of the first confirmed influenza case of the 2011-2012 influenza season.

Please forward this message to all appropriate personnel within your institution.

**First Influenza Culture-confirmed Case of the 2011-2012 Season**

The Minnesota Department of Health's Public Health Laboratory has its first CONFIRMED influenza case for this season in a 26 year old woman from Olmsted County. This case was confirmed through PCR. The woman's illness was caused by the A (H3) strain of the virus, and is a good match for this year's vaccine.

**Influenza-Rapid Tests**

Even with the announcement of the first Minnesota culture-confirmed and serotyped influenza case of this season, the PREVALENCE of influenza is still LOW in Minnesota. This is very important for determining when to use a rapid influenza test and how to interpret the results, as the predictive values of rapid tests are strongly correlated with disease prevalence. More detailed information regarding the use and interpretation of rapid influenza testing can be found at:

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

**IMPORTANT: Please Send Positive Influenza Samples**

Early and late in the season when influenza disease prevalence is low in the community, MDH-PHL needs your help to assess the influenza subtype(s) that may be present. Therefore, when your laboratory obtains a positive rapid or PCR influenza result, please send an appropriate sample to MDH. ALL submitters are encouraged to submit up to 1-2 samples per week throughout the influenza season.

**More information including when to send a sample or isolate to MDH-PHL and submission instructions can be found at:** <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/phl/clin/labflu.html>

**Testing Performed at MDH-PHL**

MDH-PHL performs real-time PCR for type A and type B influenza on all specimens that meet the testing criteria. Specimens that are positive for type A are typed for seasonal hemagglutinin types H1 and H3 and for 2009 H1N1. Select specimens will be tested for antiviral resistance and may be further characterized for the presence of potential virulence factors. Specimens from defined surveillance programs are also cultured for influenza serotyping and for the identification of other respiratory viruses. In addition, influenza isolates sent from virology laboratories are serotyped with CDC/WHO antisera for influenza A or influenza B, to determine if they match the current vaccine.

### **Laboratory Influenza Surveillance**

The MLS Laboratory Influenza Surveillance Program is made up of over 100 clinic- and hospital-based labs voluntarily submitting testing data for rapid and PCR Influenza and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) as well as some other respiratory virus on a weekly basis. Tracking the lab results assists healthcare providers with an indicator of the progression of the influenza season as well as prevalence of other respiratory diseases in the community. The data is posted weekly (information below). If you would like to participate in the weekly surveillance program please follow this link to sign up:

<https://survey.vovici.com/se.ashx?s=56206EE309BBA6CC>

### **Weekly Influenza Data On-line**

Go to <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/stats/index.html> for weekly influenza activity in Minnesota. On this site, you can subscribe to our Weekly Influenza Activity email alerts, and view information about influenza lab testing surveillance and outbreaks.

More information regarding the first influenza case of the season can be found at:

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/news/pressrel/2011/flu101311.html>

### **Questions**

If you have any further questions or concerns about influenza, please contact Sara Vetter (Virology Lab Supervisor) 651-201-5255 or Karen Martin at 651-201-5537.

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This is an update from the Minnesota Department of Health – Public Health Laboratory (MDH-PHL) 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.

**\*\*Please forward this to all appropriate personnel within your institution and Health System\*\***

The content of this message is intended for public health and health care personnel and response partners who have a need to know the information to perform their duties. It is for official use only. Do not distribute beyond the intended recipient groups as described in this message.