



**MLS Influenza Laboratory Update #4
Increased Surveillance for Novel Swine-Origin Influenza A
December 15, 2011**

Purpose of this message:

To remind laboratories to submit influenza specimens to MDH-PHL and to inform about increased surveillance for Novel Swine-Origin Influenza A.

Background:

Since July 2011, 11 cases of a reassortant novel H3N2 influenza A containing components of an influenza strain circulating in swine as well as the M gene (matrix protein) of 2009 pandemic H1N1 have occurred in IA, PA, ME, IN, and WV. Potential person-to-person transmission has been observed in about half of the cases. The majority of cases have been in children with a median age of 3 years (although there was a confirmed case in a 58 year old); most had mild disease consistent with influenza-like-illness (ILI) or acute respiratory illness (ARI). Several individuals with co-morbidities were hospitalized.

CDC has asked states to enhance surveillance for influenza particularly among children for a limited period of time to identify additional cases of novel H3N2. MDH has requested enhanced surveillance of children from specific pre-identified facilities. If suspect novel swine origin influenza cases are identified, the sample will be forwarded to CDC for identification.

Laboratories that are performing or refer specimens for influenza RT-PCR:

- Specimens tested using current FDA approved RT-PCR assays should detect the presence of seasonal and novel swine origin influenza strains, but will not differentiate novel swine origin strains from seasonal strains.
- Therefore it is extremely important that you continue to send ALL specimens testing positive or have an inconclusive result by influenza PCR to MDH-PHL for further characterization.

Laboratories performing Rapid Testing Methods

To further enhance influenza surveillance, laboratories performing rapid testing methods (EIA, IFA, DFA, PCR, etc.) should continue to submit patient specimens that are positive for influenza. In addition, virology laboratories should continue to submit all viral culture isolates that are positive for influenza.

Questions regarding laboratory testing can be referred to Dave Boxrud, Molecular Epidemiology Supervisor at 651-201-5257, or Sara Vetter, Virology Laboratory Supervisor at 651-201-5255.

More information about these novel H3N2 swine-origin influenza case can be found at:

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6047a3.htm?s_cid=mm6047a3_w

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6035a6.htm?s_cid=mm6035a6_w

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

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

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