Purpose of this Message:
To update laboratories on new submission guidelines for influenza testing at MDH-PHL. All of this information is found on the MDH Laboratory Influenza Information website at:
http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/phl/clin/labflu.html

Action items:
MDH-PHL no longer requests specimens from NON HOSPITALIZED patients (project 493).

Background: Thanks to the outstanding response from our clinical partners, MDH-PHL has been able to characterize this season’s influenza strains during this early influenza season. MDH-PHL is receiving more than enough specimens to continue to have situational awareness of circulating influenza strains and maintain the capacity to detect a novel influenza event. **To keep MDH-PHL within its testing capacity, we are asking laboratories to discontinue sending specimens for characterization from non-hospitalized patients.** Hospitalized surveillance continues unchanged as does sentinel surveillance from pre-determined sites. MDH-PHL would also still like influenza isolates to be submitted from virology laboratories.

When To Submit Specimens to MDH-PHL:
(a) HOSPITALIZED surveillance – Project 1492
   - Specimens submitted from persons who are hospitalized with ILI* or clinical suspicion of influenza OR deceased following ILI* or clinical suspicion of influenza.
   - It is important to send a specimen on any hospitalized patient with ILI* or clinical suspicion of influenza; even if rapid influenza testing is negative or if rapid influenza testing was not performed. Note, if your laboratory is performing onsite influenza testing by PCR and/or viral culture (or if you are using a reference laboratory for PCR and/or viral culture), MDH is still requesting that positive specimens be submitted to MDH-PHL for further characterization.
   - **Submission Form (Project #1492)** can be found at:
     - [http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/phl/clin/print_mdh_hosp.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/phl/clin/print_mdh_hosp.pdf) (Print and complete manually)
     - [http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/phl/clin/fillable_mdh_hosp.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/phl/clin/fillable_mdh_hosp.pdf) (Complete on your computer, then print)

(b) NON HOSPITALIZED LABORATORY surveillance – Project 493
   - Isolates from virology laboratories only.

(b) CLUSTER investigation or other **unusual circumstance** for which MDH has requested a specimen(s) be sent to MDH-PHL. Call MDH Infectious Disease Epidemiology Prevention and Control at 651-201-5414 or 1-877-676-5414 with any questions.

(d) SENTINEL surveillance – These facilities are pre-determined and have a specific protocol.

* ILI is defined as [fever > 100° F and cough or sore throat](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/phl/clin/labflu.html) in the absence of a known disease other than influenza.
Weekly Influenza Activity Webpage
Thank you to the laboratories that are providing weekly influenza and RSV data. 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](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/stats/index.html)

For questions regarding specimen submission and laboratory testing, please contact Sara Vetter, Virology Laboratory Supervisor at 651-201-5255. For Influenza Case Reporting, please contact MDH Epidemiology at 651-201-5414.

Thank you to all the laboratories that sent specimens to MDH-PHL through the beginning of the season. Your submissions were truly valuable in establishing the influenza strains circulating in the community.

Emily Tron, MS, MT (ASCP)
Program Advisor, Minnesota Laboratory System
Public Health Laboratory, Minnesota Department of Health
Phone: 651-201-5066
[emily.tron@state.mn.us](mailto:emily.tron@state.mn.us)
[www.health.state.mn.us/mls](http://www.health.state.mn.us/mls)

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.