



Placer County Health and Human Services Department

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RE: Influenza A (H3N2v) Update

Dear Colleagues,

This is an update on the situation regarding human cases with swine-origin influenza A (H3N2v) infection in the United States and a renewal of our prior request (see letter of January 4, 2012) to you to submit appropriate specimens to the Placer County Public Health Laboratory for free testing.

Current situation

A recent increase in human cases with influenza A (H3N2v) infection has been reported in several states (http://www.cdc.gov/flu/spotlights/h3n2v_us_cases.htm), with all cases having had recent contact with swine (and no evidence of sustained human-to-human transmission).

No influenza A (H3N2v) viruses have been detected in California to date.

Current recommendations

During the summer months, encourage influenza testing in the following:

- All persons with influenza-like illness (ILI)*, including severely ill/fatal cases and outpatients
- Acute respiratory outbreaks
- ILI in persons with recent swine exposures
- ILI in persons who can be epidemiologically linked to confirmed cases of novel or variant influenza.

* *Influenza-like illness = fever (>100°F or 37.8°C) and cough and/or sore throat, in the absence of a known cause*

Diagnostic testing

During the summer months, the California Department of Public Health strongly recommends the continued screening for influenza A and B on ILI specimens and subtyping using the full subtyping panel.

Testing is available at Placer County Public Health Laboratory (PCPHL) for presumptive identification of the H3N2v virus.

Type of Specimens

Specimens should be collected within the first 24-72 hours of onset of symptoms and no later than 5 days after onset of symptoms. Personnel collecting clinical specimens should wear an N95 respirator, goggles, disposable gown, and disposable gloves.

Perspective, Hope, and Opportunity

Upper respiratory samples suitable for RT-PCR include:

- Nasopharyngeal (NP swabs), nasal swabs, throat swabs, nasal aspirate, nasal washes, NP wash, and NP aspirate. For patients hospitalized with pneumonia, specimens from the lower respiratory tract should also be obtained.

Lower respiratory tract samples suitable for RT-PCR include: bronchoalveolar lavage, bronchial wash, tracheal aspirate, and lung tissue.

- Place Dacron-tipped swabs in a standard container with 2-3 ml of viral transport media (VTM).
Note: cotton or calcium alginate swabs are not acceptable for PCR testing

Each specimen should be labeled with: **date of collection, specimen type, and patient name.**

Specimen Storage and Shipment:

Specimens will not be tested if the front of attached PCPHL submittal form is not completed. The specimens should be kept refrigerated at 4°C and sent on cold packs if they can be received by the laboratory within five days of the date collected. If samples cannot be received by the laboratory within five days, they should be frozen at -70°C or below and shipped on dry ice. Specimens should be transported to the address shown on front of this form.

- Specimens must be received at the laboratory during normal business hours unless special arrangements are made.
- Incomplete forms will be faxed to submitter for revision.

There will be no charge for this service.

For questions and information about receiving collection kits and/or submission of specimens for surveillance testing, please contact the Placer County Public Health Lab at 530-889-7205 (ask to speak with the Microbiologist in the Virology section) or via email at phlab@placer.ca.gov. Your assistance with disease reporting and surveillance activities is appreciated!

Your assistance with disease reporting and enhanced surveillance activities is appreciated!

Sincerely,



Mark Starr, D.V.M., M.P.V.M.
Community Health and Clinics Director



Musau WaKabongo, Ph.D., PHM, HCLD/CC(ABB)
Laboratory Director

Additional resources

For additional information about the California Influenza Surveillance Program, please visit:
[http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Influenza\(Flu\).aspx#](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Influenza(Flu).aspx#)

For additional information on influenza A (H3N2v) in the United States, please refer to CDC's website at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/influenza-variant-viruses-h3n2v.htm>