



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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**MS Health Alert Network (HAN) Advisory**

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RECIPIENTS: Physicians (Family and General Practice, Pediatrics, and Internal Medicine), and Hospitals (Admin & ED & InfCtl)– Statewide

DATE: May 14, 2009

SUBJECT: *INFLUENZA TESTING SUMMARY AND UPDATED GUIDELINES FOR NOVEL H1N1 (SWINE) INFLUENZA A TESTING*

Dear Colleagues,

From April 27 through May 14, 2009, the Mississippi Public Health Laboratory tested 493 specimens for Novel H1N1 (swine) influenza. Twenty-eight (5.7%) have tested positive for influenza B, and 17 (3.4%) have tested positive for influenza A. Of the specimens positive for influenza A, none have tested positive for Novel H1N1 (swine) influenza, 12 have been positive for seasonal H1N1, and one is positive for H3N2. The rest of the positive influenza A samples are pending subtyping, but are negative for swine influenza.

In an ongoing effort to detect cases of Novel H1N1 (swine) influenza A infection, the Mississippi State Department of Health is broadening the criteria for submission of respiratory samples to the Public Health Laboratory for PCR influenza testing. The following interim guidelines outline the updated criteria. **Please note that emphasis is placed on testing patients who present with an influenza-like illness, defined as fever  $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$  and cough and/or sore throat.** Consult the MSDH website for updates to these guidelines at [www.healthyms.com](http://www.healthyms.com).

**INTERIM GUIDELINES FOR NOVEL H1N1 (SWINE) INFLUENZA TESTING**  
**Updated May 14, 2009**

Contact your local Public Health District **BEFORE** collection of a specimen Monday –Friday 8:00-5:00pm. (After hours, weekends and holidays call 601-576-7725 or 1-800-556-0003). These are interim guidelines; please consult the Mississippi State Department of Health website for updates at [www.healthyms.com](http://www.healthyms.com).

**NOTE: The Public Health Laboratory now has the ability to subtype influenza A viruses as either seasonal influenza or Novel H1N1 (swine) influenza. If test results are negative for influenza, or positive for seasonal influenza A or B, submitters will be notified the business day following the testing. Submitters will be notified immediately with any positive Novel H1N1 (swine) influenza results. Contact your local Public Health District for questions about results.**

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## I. CLINICAL CRITERIA (NEW)

Consider testing the following persons for Novel influenza A H1N1 infection:\*

1. Patients presenting to outpatient providers who meet the case definition for influenza-like illness (ILI), or
2. Patients admitted to the hospital with an ILI

**ILI is defined as fever (temperature of 100°F [37.8°C] or greater) and a cough and/or sore throat in the absence of a KNOWN cause other than influenza.**

\*Emphasis for testing should be placed on individuals at high risk of complications

## II. SPECIMEN TYPE

Upper respiratory specimen types that may be collected:

1. Preferred methods are nasopharyngeal swab/aspirate or nasal wash/aspirate.
2. If not available a combined nasal swab and oropharyngeal swab.

## III. SPECIMEN COLLECTION *(MSDH only provides testing supplies to the participating ILI surveillance providers.)*

Ideally, swab specimens should be collected using swabs with a synthetic tip (e.g., polyester or Dacron®) and an aluminum or plastic shaft. Swabs with cotton tips and wooden shafts are not recommended. Specimens collected with swabs made of calcium alginate are not acceptable. The swab specimen collection vials should contain 3ml of viral transport medium (e.g., containing, protein stabilizer, antibiotics to discourage bacterial and fungal growth, and buffer solution).

## IV. SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

Refrigerate the specimen at 4°C and contact the Mississippi State Department of Health Public Health District during regular working hours or 601-576-7400 after hours and on weekends to facilitate transport of the sample to the PHL. **For shipping, use cold packs to keep the sample at 4°C.**

Complete a MSDH Influenza Form 930 for each specimen with the following information: patient's name, age, date of onset of illness, type of specimen, date collected, travel/ exposure history, and clinical symptoms.

**CDC's website may be consulted for specimen collection for swine influenza at**

**<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1/flu/>**

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