



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

This is an official  
**MS Health Alert Network (HAN) Advisory**

MESSAGE ID: MSHAN-20091009-2100-ADV ([Health Advisory](#))  
RECIPIENTS: Physicians, and Hospitals (Admin & ED & InfCtl & Labs) – Statewide  
DATE: October 09, 2009  
SUBJECT: *Guidelines for Submission of Respiratory Samples for PCR Influenza Testing at the Public Health Laboratory*

**Guidelines for Submission of Respiratory Samples for PCR Influenza Testing at the Public Health Laboratory**  
**Updated 10/9/09**

Updated Guidelines for Submission

**NOTE:** The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) is only accepting specimens submitted by providers who are part of the Mississippi influenza-like illness surveillance system, or submitted from any hospitalized patient with influenza-like illness. Providers may contact the Epidemiology Program, during regular business hours, at 601.576.7725 or 1.800.556.0003 outside of the Jackson area with questions or special requests.

Respiratory samples for PCR influenza testing may be submitted under the following circumstances only:

- Any and all patients admitted to the hospital for treatment of an influenza-like illness
- Patients who meet the case definition of influenza-like illness\* and present to a designated provider who participates in the Mississippi influenza-like illness sentinel surveillance system

**A MAXIMUM OF THREE SAMPLES PER WEEK WILL BE ACCEPTED FROM EACH SENTINEL PROVIDER. THIS LIMITATION IS FOR SPECIMENS COLLECTED FROM OUTPATIENTS. IT DOES NOT APPLY TO HOSPITALIZED PATIENTS.**

\*Influenza-like illness is defined as fever (temperature of  $\geq 100^{\circ}$  or greater) and a cough and/or sore throat in the absence of a KNOWN cause other than influenza.

**A NEGATIVE RAPID TEST DOES NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF INFECTION WITH NOVEL H1N1 INFLUENZA, AND THE PATIENT SHOULD BE MANAGED BASED ON CLINICAL PRESENTATION. If the rapid test is positive for influenza A, then novel H1N1 (swine) influenza infection is likely and further testing is not necessary.**

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## Key Points

- Since the week of May 31, 2009, 99% of all subtyped positive influenza samples tested in the Public Health Laboratory (PHL) have been novel H1N1 (swine) influenza, indicating that this is the predominant virus type causing illness in Mississippi. More information about the current Mississippi surveillance and testing is available at [http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/\\_static/14,0,199,230.html](http://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,0,199,230.html).
- Influenza testing at the PHL is for surveillance purposes only. Results of the testing often take time to obtain and should **not be used for diagnostic purposes and should not delay decisions about treatment or patient management.**
- MSDH has now resumed routine influenza surveillance activities through our sentinel surveillance providers. Influenza testing at the PHL will continue throughout the influenza season to monitor the types of virus causing illness in the state, to provide the CDC with samples to test for antiviral resistance, and to monitor for potential changes in the severity of illness caused by novel H1N1 (swine) influenza.

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