



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

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2009 H1N1 Influenza Laboratory Testing

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The primary responsibility of the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory (MSPHL) during influenza epidemics and pandemics is surveillance and epidemiological testing in support of early detection, public health response and control measures, and measuring the progress and “character” of a pandemic wave(s) as it progresses at the community and state level. In the early stages of a pandemic, this involves a surge in diagnostic testing to detect cases and monitor the spread of the virus. As a pandemic evolves, the public health need to identify every case diminishes as do resources.

Missouri is beyond the early stages of the 2009 H1N1 Influenza pandemic and is currently experiencing sporadic outbreaks in congregate settings such as schools and daycares. It appears likely that infections with this virus are occurring throughout the state, although their exact number cannot be estimated.

Following advice from the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the MSPHL is currently following a testing protocol that is consistent with seasonal influenza practices and is not accepting routine specimens for novel H1N1 influenza virus testing. MSPHL will only be performing testing for this virus under the following circumstances:

1. Specimens submitted by Influenza Sentinel Providers, or
2. Specimens submitted for epidemiological investigation purposes (i.e., as part of an outbreak being investigated by DHSS, local public health agencies, and/or CDC).

The MSPHL will not perform testing on hospitalized patients, unless the testing is deemed to be of public health significance by DHSS (e.g., epidemiologically linked cases, cases with similar demographics, etc.). Commercial laboratory testing is available for routine testing of hospitalized patients.

[Note for Influenza Sentinel Providers: Sentinel Providers have returned to their traditional off-season testing protocol. DHSS requests that a minimum of three specimens be sent from each Sentinel Provider during the period from June 1 through September 30. Sentinel Providers should also submit their weekly office data to the Influenza Sentinel Physicians Surveillance Network Database.]

For patients who do not meet the above criteria, commercial laboratory testing is available.

If you have any questions, please contact the Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention at (573) 751-6113.

www.dhss.mo.gov

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