



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment

Dedicated to protecting and improving the health and environment of the people of Colorado

HEALTH ALERT NETWORK BROADCAST

MESSAGE ID: 10022017 13:15

FROM: CO-CDPHE

SUBJECT: HAN Advisory - Guidelines for influenza surveillance and specimen submission, 2017-2018 season | October 2, 2017

RECIPIENTS: Local Public Health Agencies / IPs / Clinical Labs

RECIPIENT INSTRUCTIONS: Local Public Health Agencies - for your information only

This information is for the public health and health care community. Do not post this document on a public web or social media site

HAN ADVISORY | Guidelines for influenza surveillance & specimen submission, 2017-2018 season Oct. 2, 2017

This information is for the public health and health care community. Do not post this document on a public web or social media site.

Key points

- Influenza surveillance for the 2016-2017 influenza season officially began Oct. 1, 2017.
- This year, the state public health laboratory will only accept specimens from eight designated sentinel specimen submitters around the state. These clinical labs are geographically representative of the state and already have been notified. Only specimens from these submitters will be accepted for testing.
- Pre-determined sentinel submitters are asked to send “duplicate” swab or residual aliquot of NP aspirates to the state lab for subtyping by PCR (at no charge) from any inpatient testing POSITIVE for influenza by any method. Specimens that are already subtyped should not be sent.
- Influenza-associated hospitalizations and pediatric deaths due to influenza are reportable conditions. Submission of specimens does not constitute reporting. Cases may be reported through CEDRS, by calling or faxing CDPHE, or by calling your local public health agency.
- A statewide influenza surveillance conference call for hospital laboratories and reporters will be held Oct. 6, 2017, from 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. to review this guidance and answer questions. The call line is 1-877-820-7831, passcode 769255.

Background information

While the 2017-2018 influenza season officially began Oct. 1, 2017, 27 cases of hospitalized influenza have been reported statewide between Aug. 1 and Sept. 30, 2017. This is more than double the typical number of cases for this time of year. The unpredictable nature of influenza makes it challenging to interpret this increase in early cases, but it may be suggestive of an earlier or more severe influenza season.

Surveillance for the 2017-2018 season

Influenza surveillance for the 2017-2018 influenza season officially began Oct. 1, 2017. This year we are updating our specimen submission protocol, so please review carefully. The purpose of statewide influenza surveillance is to:

1. identify circulating strains of influenza;
2. identify the peak of the season; and,
3. identify any novel influenza viruses that may be circulating.

While in past seasons we asked for submission of specimens from all clinical laboratories statewide, this year we believe we can better accomplish these goals with our limited resources by collecting a smaller, representative sample of specimens. Additionally, we are seeing an increased number of clinical labs conducting influenza PCR and subtyping in house, which allows us to understand circulating strains without additional testing being done at the state lab.

We have identified eight sentinel clinical labs around the state to submit a pre-determined number of specimens each week during the year. These labs have been notified by email and phone separate from this HAN. Only specimens from these submitters will be accepted at the state public health laboratory for testing.

Pre-determined sentinel submitters are asked to send “duplicate” swab or residual aliquot of NP aspirates to the state lab for subtyping by PCR (at no charge) from any inpatient testing POSITIVE for influenza by any method. Specimens that are already subtyped should not be sent.

More information about Influenza surveillance including the weekly Colorado Flu Report and CDPHE laboratory PCR confirmation of positive tests for the 2017-8 season can be found on our website at

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/influenza-data>

For information about the 2016-2017 season, please visit

https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/DC_ComDis-Influenza-Report_1.pdf

We will continue to use the CSTE case definition for hospitalized influenza cases. Hospitalized flu cases with any positive flu test (including rapid tests) will be considered confirmed. This will allow us to be consistent with other states, the Emerging Infections Program, and CDC.

For more information on the CSTE case definition for hospitalized influenza, please visit

<https://wwwn.cdc.gov/nndss/conditions/influenza-associated-hospitalizations/case-definition/2012/>.

Reporting influenza-associated hospitalizations and pediatric deaths

Influenza-associated hospitalizations and pediatric deaths due to influenza are reportable conditions. Submission of specimens does not constitute reporting. Cases may be reported through CEDRS, by calling or faxing CDPHE, or by calling your local public health agency.

For more information

- A statewide influenza surveillance conference call for hospital laboratorians and reporters will be held on Friday, Oct. 6, 2017, from 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. to review this guidance and answer any questions/ The call line is 1-877-820-7831, passcode 769255.
- For sentinel submitters who have laboratory questions or to request specimen requisition forms, call the CDPHE Molecular Science Laboratory at (303) 692-3286.
- For influenza surveillance questions or to report influenza-related hospitalizations or pediatric deaths, call the CDPHE Communicable Disease Branch at (303) 692-2700

