

Tennessee Department of Health (TDOH) State Laboratory Testing Policy for H1N1 Influenza

Effective Date: September 1, 2009

TDOH State Laboratory will limit testing specimens for H1N1 to the following:

- Those specimens submitted by providers in the Tennessee Sentinel Provider Network (SPN)
- Those specimens submitted by providers in the Emerging Infections Program (EIP)

Capacity for testing additional specimens is limited and exceptions will only be made for cases of public health significance. All special requests for testing by the state lab must be pre-approved on a case by case basis. **All specimens received by the state laboratory without pre-approval will be returned to the provider.**

- **If you are east of the Tennessee River**, your exception request will go to the Knoxville State Laboratory. Please contact the Knoxville Laboratory Director Robyn Atkinson at 865-549-5217 for pre-approval.
- **If you are west of the Tennessee River**, your exception request will go to the Jackson Laboratory Director, Dr. Oristyne Walker at 731-426-0686.
- If the exception request is pre-approved, results, positive or negative, will be reported via facsimile to the submitting provider identified on the exception request.

In the majority of cases, testing is unnecessary. Treatment should be based on clinical presentation and should not be delayed for a confirmatory test. If indicated, treatment is most effective if initiated within 48 hours of symptom onset.

Rapid tests have limited sensitivity but, when positive, can distinguish between influenza A and B. This may help with clinical decision making. Specific groups in which testing is likely to be beneficial include: pregnant women, healthcare workers, and hospitalized patients, particularly those in intensive care units. Specific testing for H1N1 is available commercially. Providers are urged to contact their routine commercial laboratory providers to inquire about testing options.

The TDOH will post updates on our website on the status of commercial availability of H1N1 test, a summary of rapid test data, and frequent updates including distribution of circulating serotypes in the state at: <http://health.state.tn.us/health/H1N1.htm#hcp>.

Additional information regarding the following may be found at:

- Rapid influenza testing:
 - http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/rapid_testing.htm
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5830a2.htm>
- Overview of tests and specimen handling:
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/rapid_testing.htm
- Information for clinicians on a wide range of H1N1-related topics:
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/>
- State specific information
 - Regional/local health depts. <http://health.state.tn.us/localdepartments.htm>
 - State Laboratory (615-262-3600)
 - Communicable and Environmental Disease Services (615-741-7247).