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HEALTH ADVISORY *10/15/2009*

Influenza Testing and Reporting Recommendations for the 2009-2010 Flu Season

The 2009 H1N1 [Swine] influenza activity has been well documented in our community by a high attack rate as expressed in our high absenteeism in our schools, overloading of our emergency rooms and increased volume in practitioner's offices. Most patients with an uncomplicated illness consistent with influenza can be diagnosed clinically and do not require influenza testing for clinical management, including antiviral treatment decisions. In certain situations, influenza diagnostic testing of patients who are not severely ill may help inform decisions regarding clinical care, infection control, or management of close contacts. Clinicians should use their clinical judgment in these situations to decide when to test for influenza in patients who are not severely ill. Consider the following factors:

- Sensitivity of the influenza diagnostic screening test used is low and up to 40% of the negatives may actually be positive
- 99% of the influenza virus circulating at this time is 2009 H1N1 [Swine]

Clinical judgment is an important factor in treatment decisions. Most patients who have had 2009 H1N1 virus infection have had a self-limited respiratory illness similar to typical seasonal influenza. Most healthy persons who develop suspected or confirmed 2009 H1N1 influenza or seasonal influenza who present with an uncomplicated febrile illness generally do not require antiviral treatment. In addition, persons who appear to be recovering from influenza generally do not require antiviral treatment. .

The state will still test for epidemiologic reasons for 2009 H1N1 influenza in hospitalized patients, deaths from influenza-like illnesses and pregnant patients. Treatment should not be delayed for results and you can call our communicable disease section if you have questions on testing at the state.

Further information on testing or treatment can be found at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/recommendations.htm>
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/diagnostic_tests.htm