

6/5/2009

SWINE ORIGIN INFLUENZA VIRUS (A/SWH1)

Changes in Criteria for Testing for Swine-origin Influenza A H1N1 at the Washington State Public Health Laboratories, June 4, 2009

In accordance with recent recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Washington State Public Health Laboratories (PHL) have changed their criteria for testing specimens for swine-origin influenza A H1N1 (SOIV) virus.

PHL will continue to accept specimens for SOIV testing from patients in the following groups:

- Fatal cases with unexplained severe respiratory illness, respiratory failure, or pneumonia
- Hospitalized patients with respiratory illness (fever $\geq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ with shortness of breath, hypoxia, or radiographic evidence of pneumonia) **AND** a positive screening test for influenza A virus¹
- Healthcare workers with influenza-like-illness (fever $\geq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ with either cough or sore throat) **AND** a positive screening test for influenza A virus*

In addition, healthcare providers should contact their local health jurisdictions regarding PHL testing for SOIV in the following situations:

- Potential outbreaks of SOIV
- Critically ill patients in intensive care units with unexplained respiratory illness and a negative screening test for influenza A virus

Please note that PHL will reject specimens that do not meet these testing criteria. Specifically, PHL will no longer test outpatients with influenza-like illness who are < 5 years, ≥ 65 years, or pregnant. Though PHL will not accept specimens for testing in these groups, some commercial labs are now offering SOIV testing for diagnostic purposes and providers are encouraged to seek testing if they feel it is necessary for patient care. A new SOIV testing algorithm is available at www.doh.wa.gov/ehsphl/Epidemiology/CD/swineflu/sflu-testalg.pdf

Specimens for SOIV testing must arrive at PHL with a completed PHL "Virology H1N1 Specimen Submission Form" which clearly indicates the reason for testing. An updated form is available at www.doh.wa.gov/ehsphl/Epidemiology/CD/swineflu/VirH1N1form.pdf

Further changes in testing for SOIV may occur depending on the scope and severity of disease. Thank you for your patience with these changes and your continued assistance in surveillance of SOIV in Washington.

To view previous CD Updates, www.co.thurston.wa.us/health
Notifiable Conditions Reporting 360-786-5470

¹ Appropriate screening test include rapid antigen detection tests, immunofluorescence assays, cell culture, or PCR assays to identify influenza A viruses.