

# STATE OF COLORADO

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

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Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

HAN Alert - Health Alert Network Broadcast

MESSAGE ID: 09092009 11:00

FROM: CO-CDPHE

SUBJECT: HAN Update – 2009 H1N1 Influenza Testing for Public Health Monitoring – Denver Metro Area Hospitals

RECIPIENTS: Emergency Departments, ICPs, Laboratories, Local Public Health Agencies

RECIPIENT INSTRUCTIONS: Local Public Health Agencies - for your information

This message can also be found on [www.cohan.state.co.us](http://www.cohan.state.co.us)

## HEALTH UPDATE 2009 H1N1 Influenza Testing for Public Health Monitoring for Denver Metro Area Hospitals

September 9, 2009

**ATTENTION: Emergency Departments, Infection Preventionists, Laboratories**

### KEY POINTS:

- The goals of state laboratory confirmatory (PCR) testing for influenza among hospitals in the Denver metro area are “complete as possible” surveillance for influenza hospitalizations and public health monitoring of circulating influenza viruses.
- State laboratory testing for influenza (including 2009 H1N1) is not intended for diagnostic or clinical management purposes.
- **Hospitals in the 5-county Denver metro area are asked to submit specimens for surveillance testing for 2009 H1N1 as well as seasonal influenza from:**
  - **ALL patients ADMITTED with fever and acute respiratory illness regardless of rapid influenza test results** (which have limited sensitivity for 2009 H1N1)  
*\*\*\* Operationally, this may be defined as all patients being admitted who are having any flu test*
  - Details on specimen collection, storage, and transport are on page 2
- Influenza-associated hospitalizations are a reportable condition to public health.  
**ALL influenza hospitalizations with any type of positive flu test should be reported to public health** (via CEDRS or faxing reports to the state or local health department).
- Please update CEDRS records if DEATH occurs in a hospitalized influenza case.

## Specimen Collection

- To collect and submit specimens for influenza PCR testing at the state lab:

Acceptable specimens include:

- **Nasopharyngeal swab** that has not been used in rapid flu testing which is placed in viral transport media (or 1ml of sterile saline)
- **Nasal wash** (in sterile container)
- **Nasal (anterior nares) swab PLUS throat swab** that have not been used in rapid flu testing which are placed in viral transport media (or 1ml of sterile saline)
- Wood shaft swabs should not be used
- To request additional specimen collection supplies and requisition forms from the state laboratory, call Dr. Kim Keane (303-692-3486) or the Molecular Science Laboratory (303-692-3286).

## Specimen Storage and Transport

- Specimens should be stored at 4°C until transport to the state laboratory.
- Specimens should be packaged for transport as diagnostic samples and shipped at 4°C.
- Specimens must be received by the state laboratory within 72 hours following collection.
- **To request courier pick-up (at no charge) call: (303) 692-3086.**
- Criteria for specimen rejection by the state laboratory include:
  - incomplete labeling or documentation
  - specimens collected using wooden shaft swabs
  - specimens not received at 4°C
  - insufficient specimen volume
  - specimens received greater than 72 hours following collection

## For Questions

For questions, please contact the CDPHE Communicable Disease Epidemiology Program (303-692-2700 or after-hours: 303-370-9395) or your local public health department.

## More Information About 2009 H1N1 Influenza

- CDPHE website: <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/epr/H1N1.html>
- CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/index.htm>