

Swine Flu Update #3

Current Situation

The Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) has submitted several specimens from patients with probable H1N1 swine influenza to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for confirmatory testing. These specimens came from patients who were identified through the enhanced surveillance established in Southern Nevada for this purpose and are not unexpected.

If confirmed by the CDC, these cases would represent the first confirmed cases of H1N1 influenza identified in Southern Nevada. One person has been confirmed as having been infected Northern Nevada. As of May 1, 2009, 141 cases have been identified in the United States, including one death. Worldwide, 331 cases and 10 deaths have been reported. No deaths have been reported in Nevada.

Clinicians should consider the possibility of H1N1 swine influenza virus infections in Southern Nevada patients presenting with acute febrile respiratory illness and travel to an affected area or contact with ill persons from an affected area within 7 days prior to onset. Acute febrile respiratory illness is defined as an illness with a measured temperature of at least 100°F and recent onset of one or more of the following symptoms: rhinorrhea, nasal congestion, sore throat, or cough.

In order to identify the local transmission of disease, the Southern Nevada Health District recommends that patients with acute febrile respiratory illness, especially those who are hospitalized, be screened for influenza A infection by rapid testing. For patients with a positive screening test for influenza A, viral typing by PCR is performed by the Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory (SPNHL), and confirmatory testing is currently performed at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Rapid influenza testing can be performed in a clinician's office or at a commercial or hospital laboratory.

- Healthcare providers who have the ability to run their own rapid influenza tests should collect two swabs from the same site or one nasal wash from the patient. If positive for influenza A then place the second swab or nasal washing in viral transport media and

contact the Office of Epidemiology at 759-1300, option 2 to make arrangements for specimen pickup.

- Healthcare providers who are not conducting rapid influenza testing at their facilities should contact their reference laboratory for instructions on submission of samples for rapid influenza testing including submission of a sample to the SNPHL for molecular testing if rapid influenza A is positive.
- Healthcare providers who utilize commercial laboratories but do not collect specimens should order testing from the laboratory by their usual process. Commercial laboratories have been instructed to submit specimens positive for influenza A to SNPHL for PCR testing. Healthcare providers should provide a mask for the patient to wear to the collection site in order to minimize the risk of exposure for other patients.

Patients who screen positive and have specimens submitted for viral typing should be reported to the Office of Epidemiology at 759-1300, option #2.

Specimen Collection

Ideally, swab specimens should be collected using swabs with a synthetic tip (e.g. polyester or Dacron®) and an aluminum or plastic shaft. Culturettes are an acceptable swab to be submitted for testing. Swabs with cotton tips and wooden shafts are not recommended. Specimens collected with swabs made of calcium alginate are not acceptable for testing.

The two swabs submitted should be collected from the same site, and it is not necessary to submit additional swabs or swabs from multiple sites.

Commercial Laboratory Codes

Laboratory testing for swine flu ordered through Quest Diagnostics should be ordered under test code 3714, and testing ordered through Labcorp should be ordered under test code 87894X002.

For More Information

Updates on the progress in the investigation and any additional recommendations will be posted on the SNHD website <http://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/outbreaks/swine-flu-index.htm> and the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/investigation.htm>.