

## **PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY** **INFLUENZA UPDATE** **FEBRUARY 27, 2019**

### **Situation Update**

According to CDC, influenza activity for the 18/19 season is wide spread in 48 states, including California. The increased activity is predominantly driven by influenza A (H1N1) 2009. Although this influenza season is not as severe thus far as the 2017/2018 season, significant illness has been reported in Riverside County. See **Table 1** for comparison of ICU and fatal cases.

**Table 1. Reported ICU and flu associated deaths October 1, 2018 – February 22, 2019**

	<b>2017/2018</b>	<b>2018/2019</b>
<b>ICU Cases</b>	69	36
<b>Flu Associated Deaths</b>	18	8

### **Actions requested of clinicians:**

- Report laboratory-confirmed cases of seasonal influenza that meet the specified criteria as well as outbreaks of undiagnosed influenza-like illness (ILI)\* in residents of large groups or institutional settings to County of Riverside Disease Control, by fax to (951) 358-5102, or CalREDIE for health care facilities participating in CalREDIE.
- Treat patients with suspected or confirmed influenza who are hospitalized for severe illness or who are at higher risk for influenza-related complications with oseltamivir or zanamivir. Treat early and empirically, without relying on lab test results.

The Influenza Antiviral Medication Summary for clinicians may be accessed at <http://cdc.gov/flu/antivirals/index.htm>. Advise persons with ILI\* to stay home until 24 hours after fever resolves, except patients that require medical evaluation and care.

\*ILI is defined as fever (>37.8°C or 100°F) and either cough or sore throat (in the absence of a known cause other than influenza).

## **Influenza Testing**

Laboratory testing with real time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR) is the preferred testing method when there is strong clinical suspicion, even if the rapid test is negative.

Testing is indicated for:

- Hospitalized, intensive care unit (ICU) and/or fatal cases with ILI.
- Acute respiratory outbreaks.
- ILI in any person where history of travel or recent close contacts or exposures within 10 days of symptoms onset suggests concern for variant or novel influenza infection (e.g., variant).

## **Lab Submission Protocol**

The Public Health Laboratory (PHL) is able to receive specimens Monday through Friday. Due to high volume of specimens, it is requested that *only specimens on the priority groups listed above* be submitted to the PHL.

The laboratory Influenza Submission Form that must accompany the specimen is located at:

[http://rivcolab.org/Portals/0/pdf/Forms/Influenza\\_Submission\\_Form.pdf?ver=2018-07-24-144735-437](http://rivcolab.org/Portals/0/pdf/Forms/Influenza_Submission_Form.pdf?ver=2018-07-24-144735-437)

- Failure to submit the required form may result in the specimen not being tested.
- To request diagnostic influenza testing, please indicate on the form to ensure appropriate turnaround time.
- Please refer to the form instructions for proper specimen collection, handling and transport. Specimens that do not meet the appropriate criteria may be rejected.

Please contact the Public Health Laboratory director at (951) 358-5070, for questions on specimen submission. Disease Control can be reached at (951) 358-5107 for questions on reporting influenza cases and outbreaks.

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