

# Sentinel Flu Testing HEALTH ALERT

December 13, 2019

Attn: All practitioners, medical support staff and laboratory staff

Humboldt County Public Health Lab is requesting submission of influenza samples for our sentinel testing. The purpose of this testing is to validate our lab's new molecular platform. Sentinel testing will be done at no charge. We will provide all supplies necessary to complete this testing.

Steps to submit sentinel test samples:

- Collect an additional NP swab at the same time a rapid flu test sample is collected
- Only use supplies provided by Humboldt County Public Health Lab
- Submit results of rapid testing along with swab (we cannot accept the rapid test swabs)
- Send us the HCPHL swab samples regardless of whether rapid flu tests results are positive or negative
- We are seeking a mix of Influenza A (+), Influenza B (+) and Influenza (-) samples
- Please write "Sentinel Flu Testing" on the test requisition

Once the test is completed, we will send you a report of the results. We will notify you once we have received enough samples to complete our validation process. At that point, we will resume our normal Sentinel Flu testing submission request of 1-2 positive influenza swabs per agency per month.

Please contact us to let us know if you are willing to participate in sentinel testing. Your help is greatly appreciated!

## 1) **Laboratory**

- Specimens will be tested for influenza A and B by PCR. Specimens that test positive by PCR for influenza A will then be sub-typed as A (seasonal H1), A (H3), or A (2009 H1N1). Testing is provided M-F with a turn-around time of 48 hours or less. Sub-typing results are available once per week and all novel influenza viruses will be sent to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) for further characterization.
- **Case Definition:** Specimens should be collected from patients with influenza-like illnesses (temperature  $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$  [or  $37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ ] orally, AND cough and/or sore throat), especially those with any of the following:
  - Persons hospitalized with suspected influenza,
  - Persons at high risk for developing flu-related complications, including children younger than 5, adults 65 years of age and older, pregnant women, and those with certain underlying medical conditions,
  - Persons with recent overseas travel history.
- **Lab Submissions:** Contact the Humboldt County Public Health Laboratory (HCPHL) immediately to arrange for testing, (707) 268-2179 or after hours call the lab courier phone to schedule pick up, (707) 499-4513.

Acceptable Specimens:

- Specimens should be accompanied by a completely filled out HCPHL requisition, a clinical history and copies of any labs,
- Obtain one **nasopharyngeal swab (NP)** during the acute phase of the illness; within 5 days of onset of respiratory symptoms,



- Use a fine tipped, nylon flocked swab for collection, provided by the HCPHL and additional kits can be obtained by calling the main lab at, **(707) 268-2179** or call the lab courier phone to arrange for drop-off after hours, **(707) 499-4513**
- After collection, place the swab into the provided Viral Transport Media and store and ship the specimen at refrigerator temperature (4°C).
- **Note:** If other respiratory viruses are suspected please submit the same type of specimen and order the respiratory panel from the lab (R-mix); which will test for Influenza A & B, Parainfluenza 1,2,& 3, Adenovirus, metapneumovirus and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) by cell culture.
- **Testing:** For influenza testing, RT-PCR is recommended, which can be done at the local public health laboratory; **antigen detection tests such as rapid influenza diagnostic tests and immunofluorescence assays (DFA) lack sensitivity and false negative results can occur**, so a negative result does not rule out influenza virus infection; confirm by RT-PCR assay if influenza is needed for clinical management.

**Send specimens to:**

**Humboldt Co. DHHS, PHB Laboratory, 529 I St. Eureka CA 95501**  
**Main Laboratory Number: (707) 268-2179**  
**Lab courier pick-up call: (707) 499-4513**





## Influenza PCR

The Influenza PCR assay allows for sensitive DNA detection of the Influenza A and B viruses

- All identified Influenza A viruses will be further Sub-typed for H1 & H3
- This assay can also detect the 2009 A:H1N1 strain (Pandemic Influenza)

## R-MIX: Viral R-Mix Culture

This test isolates and identifies eight (8) common respiratory viruses:

- **Influenza A**                      **Influenza B**                      **Adenovirus**
- **Parainfluenza 1**                  **Parainfluenza 2**                  **Parainfluenza 3**
- **Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)**                  **Metapneumovirus (MPV)**

Use **Only** HCPHL collection kits if the assay is being performed by HCPHL: kit includes Flocked Nasopharyngeal swabs, Viral Transport Media (VTM), and HCPHL test requisition **Note: One specimen may be used to perform both tests**

- Please Fill out HCPHL requisition completely and legibly
- For more collection kits and requisitions please contact HCPHL at **707-268-2179**
- Courier pick-up is provided by HCPHL; for pick-up, call **707-499-4513**

## Collection & Transport

- Collect one **Nasopharyngeal swab (NP)** during the acute phase of the illness; within 5 days of onset of respiratory symptoms
- Use a fine tipped, nylon flocked swab for collection, provided by HCPHL
  - After collection, place the swab into the provided VTM
  - Keep Refrigerated (4°C)

### Handling Conditions:

- The swab/ Viral Transport Media should be transported immediately to the HCPHL and received ≤ 3 days from time of collection.
- **Store and ship at refrigerator temperature (4°C)**

### Additional Information

#### Influenza PCR:

- Turn-around time: 48 hrs
- Cost: \$90.00 → We can bill private insurance and Medi-Cal

#### Viral Culture:

- Turn-around time: 48 hrs.
- Cost: \$150.00 → We can bill private insurance and Medi-Cal

### Collecting a Nasopharyngeal Specimen:

1. Fill out the provided HCPHL requisition
2. Insert NP swab into nostril to the posterior nasopharynx
  - a. Both nares should be swabbed to increase sensitivity
3. Rotate swab several times for 5-30 seconds
4. Place the swab into the Viral Transport Media
5. Label specimen appropriately and completely
6. Store and transport specimen as above
7. Call HCPHL for Courier pick-up → **707-499-4513**

