



July 28, 2009

Updated Guidance Document: For Providers Participating in the Florida Outpatient Influenza-like-illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) Enhanced Influenza Surveillance due to Novel Influenza A H1N1

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This is an update to the guidance document previously dated April 29, 2009. This document supersedes the earlier document: "Guidance Document: Florida Outpatient Influenza-like-illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) Enhanced Influenza Surveillance - April 29, 2009"

Summary:

- **Submit 5 specimens each week** for testing to the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) Bureau of Laboratories. Specimens should be collected only from those patients meeting the case definition for influenza-like-illness (ILI).
Definition of ILI: Fever $\geq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ (100°F) and a cough and/or sore throat
- **NEW - REQUIRED: Record your Sentinel Provider Number and "Sentinel Provider Specimen" on the laboratory specimen submission form** when submitting specimens for testing to FDOH Bureau of Laboratories. (Sentinels receive pre-printed laboratory specimen submission forms from the Bureau of Laboratories.)
- **Report weekly ILI data through the CDC website by noon every Tuesday.**

Note: As with all communications about the pandemic due to the novel 2009 influenza A H1N1 virus, this document may become outdated as the situation changes. Documents on this topic dated after July 28 supersede this one. This document will be posted on the Bureau of Epidemiology website at http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/epi/swineflu/index.html

The sentinel provider program is a very important surveillance system used by FDOH to monitor influenza-like-illness in the outpatient setting.

The sentinel surveillance program is relied on heavily by FDOH to monitor the novel influenza A H1N1 activity. Thank you for your participation!

Please use the following updated program guidance for: 1) submitting specimens to the Bureau of Laboratories for testing, and 2) reporting influenza-like-illness patient visits.

1) Submit specimens to the FDOH Bureau of Laboratories for influenza testing:

- Collect specimens from **patients that meet the case definition for influenza or influenza-like-illness (ILI)** and ship these specimens to FDOH Bureau of Laboratories in **Jacksonville or Tampa, as you customarily do as a part of FSISN**. *Definition of ILI: Fever $\geq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ (100°F) and a cough and/or sore throat*



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- **Each week**, please collect a specimen from **up to 5 patients** AND who meet the ILI case definition.
 - In addition, even if you have already sent 5 specimens for the week, collect specimens from patients who are part of influenza or ILI outbreaks or clusters. Specimens collected for submission from patients who are part of outbreaks should be cleared for submission by your county health department.
 - In addition, even if you have already sent 5 specimens for the week, collect specimens from people with life-threatening influenza-like-illness.
 - **NEW - REQUIRED: Record your Sentinel Provider Number** on the laboratory specimen submission form. This is the same number you currently utilize when logging in to report your weekly ILI numbers on the CDC website. (FDOH has changed the policy for specimen testing for providers not participating in FL ILINet. Recording your Sentinel Provider Number will ensure specimens from FL ILINet are tested. In order to facilitate this, new specimen submission forms with pre-printed Sentinel Provider Numbers will be mailed to all providers during July and August 2009.)
 - **NEW - REQUIRED: Record "Sentinel Provider Specimen"** on the laboratory specimen submission form.
 - County health department sentinel providers that place orders through HMS electronic laboratory ordering (ELO) must ALSO submit the sentinel laboratory specimen requisition with the specimens.

2) Report your influenza-like-illness patient visits.

We will continue to monitor this data throughout the summer. FDOH relies very heavily on these data.

- Report your weekly number of ILI patients by age-group every week. When reporting, also record the total number of patient visits (for all causes).
- **Reports should be made each week**, even if your practice did not see any patients with influenza-like-illness. Simply record "0" for this information. You will still need to record the total number of patients seen (for all causes) in your practice.
- **Reports should be received no later than noon on Tuesdays.**
- The website for reporting your ILI data: <https://www.ncid.cdc.gov/flu/>

How to collect and ship specimens for testing:

Specimen Collection:

- Collect nasopharyngeal or throat specimens with a viral swab and place in viral transport medium (VTM) from those patients with ILI.
Definition of ILI: Fever $\geq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ (100°F) and a cough and/or sore throat
- Preferred specimen is a nasopharyngeal swab or oropharyngeal swab (NOT nose swabs). There must be an adequate volume of the sample or the test will not be valid.
- These other routine respiratory specimens are also acceptable, but not recommended:
 - nasopharyngeal aspirates
 - bronchial wash
 - sputum (NOT saliva)
- Swabs MUST be placed in **2-3 ml of viral transport media**.
- Ideally, specimens should be collected within 3 days of onset of illness.



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- When influenza is detected in a clinical laboratory by RAPID TESTING methods, please send an aliquot (1-2 ml) of the original swab eluate in **viral transport media** (not exposed to test kit reagents); or if an additional original specimen is available, that is preferable. Do NOT send the rapid test reagent.
 - If influenza is detected in a clinical laboratory by VIRAL CULTURE, please send the actively growing viral culture tube with 2 ml of **viral cell culture maintenance media**.

Specimen shipping:

- Ship to FDOH Bureau of Laboratories -Tampa or -Jacksonville (whichever is your servicing Laboratory), as usual.
- All specimens must be accompanied by a Sentinel Provider requisition form, which is available with pre-printed sentinel provider information from your servicing laboratory.
- **NEW:** Record "**Sentinel Provider Specimen**" on the specimen requisition form. (Sentinel providers should receive specimen requisition forms from the Bureau of Laboratories.) This will help us rapidly track and process specimens submitted by practices participating in FSISN and assure appropriate specimen testing.
- **NEW:** Record **Sentinel Provider Number** on the specimen requisition form if not using one of the pre-printed forms. (Sentinel providers should receive specimen requisition forms from the Bureau of Laboratories.) This will help us rapidly track and process specimens submitted by practices participating in FL ILINet and assure appropriate specimen testing.
- Keep specimens refrigerated at 4°C and ship on gel ice no later than 48 hours post collection.

Providers should use the specimen collection kits and shipping supplies provided from the Bureau of Laboratories for this project.

- As soon as possible, determine if adequate specimen collection and testing kits and shipping supplies are available to ensure the necessary supplies, including swabs and viral transport medium, are on hand and available for use.
 - If the viral transport media is outdated, but still clear and pink, (i.e. not cloudy or yellow-orange), it can still be used if necessary until replacements are received.
 - The expiration date is the last day of the month printed on the wrapper.
- Contact the appropriate Bureau of Laboratories servicing laboratory facility if replacement materials are needed.
- Store the gel ice packs in freezer until needed so they will be ready for use.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call your county health department for information or, if you are unable to reach your county health department, please contact the Bureau of Epidemiology 850-245-4401. You may also contact the Bureau of Laboratories directly through the contact number you received with the specimen collection kits to order replacement specimen collection and testing materials.

Thank you for participating in this important program!