



22 July 2009 5:00PM
10176-DAD-07-22-09

This is an official DHEC Health Advisory

Updated Recommendations for Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Testing and Reporting

Summary

As more ill persons have been identified and more epidemiologic and clinical information has been gathered regarding novel influenza A (H1N1), this update provides recommendations for testing of patients for the presence of novel influenza A (H1N1) via the SC DHEC Bureau of Laboratories.

In order to continue monitoring the severity of novel influenza A (H1N1), SC DHEC is requesting that healthcare facilities report, within 24 hours of laboratory confirmation, newly hospitalized patients with novel influenza A (H1N1).

Testing for Novel Influenza A (H1N1) by SC DHEC Bureau of Laboratories

Both the CDC and SC DHEC recommend that testing be prioritized for those with severe respiratory illness and those at highest risk of complications from influenza.

Novel H1N1 viruses now make up more than 99% of all subtyped influenza A viruses analyzed by the U.S. WHO/NREVSS collaborating laboratories.

For public health surveillance, not all individuals with suspected novel influenza (H1N1) infection need to have the diagnosis confirmed. Surveillance is focused upon the monitoring of influenza activity levels, virus characteristics and severity of illness.

As part of this continued surveillance, the SC DHEC Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology, in collaboration with the SC DHEC Bureau of Laboratories, will now only recommend and offer testing for Novel Influenza A (H1N1) for persons who have an acute febrile respiratory illness defined as:

- fever (temperature of 100°F [37.8°C] or greater), **and**
- cough and/or a sore throat in the absence of a known cause other than influenza.

And are in one or more of the following groups, that

- require hospitalization, **or**
- are part of a newly identified outbreak within a congregate setting for which SC DHEC has requested testing to be performed as part of an investigation (see SC DHEC contact numbers listed below), **or**
- are at high-risk for severe disease (as listed in the “**Groups at high risk for complications**” section below).

Definitions:

- **Outbreak:** defined as an excess number of cases or symptoms over the expected occurrence within the population group.
- **Congregate Setting:** defined as long-term care facilities, summer camps, summer schools, prisons, military facilities, etc.

Groups at High Risk for Complications

Currently, insufficient data are available to determine who is at higher risk for complications of novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection. Thus, at this time, the same age and risk groups who are at higher risk for seasonal influenza complications should also be considered at higher risk for novel influenza A (H1N1) complications.

Groups at higher risk for seasonal influenza complications include:

- Children less than 5 years old;
- Persons aged 65 years or older;
- Children and adolescents (less than 18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy and who might be at risk for experiencing Reye's syndrome after influenza virus infection;
- Pregnant women;
- Adults and children who have chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular, hepatic, hematological, neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic disorders;
- Adults and children who have immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV);
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities.

Additional Resources for H1N1 Testing

Quest Diagnostics, through its Focus Diagnostics infectious disease reference laboratory, has introduced a laboratory-developed real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to aid in identifying novel Influenza A (H1N1) virus infection.

Additional information can be obtained at: <http://www.questdiagnostics.com/patient/swineflu.html>

Infection Control Guidelines for Specimen Collection

SC DHEC continues to recommend Standard and Droplet precautions for healthcare workers, as we do for seasonal influenza. This includes the collection of clinical specimens. Additional information regarding use of appropriate PPE during clinical specimen collection can be found at: www.shea-online.org/Assets/files/policy/061209_H1N1_Statement.pdf

Reporting of Hospitalized Novel Influenza A (H1N1) patients

As part of our public health surveillance and monitoring of Novel Influenza A (H1N1) severity, SC DHEC is requesting that healthcare facilities report to their Regional public health offices (see contact numbers below), within 24 hours of laboratory confirmation, newly hospitalized patients with novel influenza A (H1N1).

Sources for Additional Information

- For more information regarding the latest CDC recommendations for novel influenza A (H1N1), please see the CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/recommendations.htm>
- Additional information from SC DHEC regarding surveillance and response to novel influenza A (H1N1) is available at: <http://www.scdhec.gov/flu/swine-flu.htm>

DHEC Contact Information for Reportable Diseases and Reporting Requirements

Reporting of outbreaks/clusters of cases of influenza (both seasonal and novel H1N1), aggregate positive influenza rapid tests, positive virus cultures for influenza and influenza deaths are consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2004 List of Reportable Conditions available at: http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/docs/reportable_conditions.pdf

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices – 2009

Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region.

Region 1

Anderson, Oconee

220 McGee Road
Anderson, SC 29625
Phone: (864) 260-4358
Fax: (864) 260-5623
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-298-4442

Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Saluda

736 S. Main Street
Greenwood, SC 29646
Phone: 1-888-218-5475
Fax: (864) 942-3690
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-420-1915

Region 2

Greenville, Pickens

PO Box 2507
200 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29602-2507
Phone: (864) 282-4139
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-993-1186

Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union

PO Box 4217
51 E. Wood Street
Spartanburg, SC 29305-4217
Phone: (864) 596-2227, x- 210
Fax: (864) 596-3443
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-993-1186

Region 3

Chester, Lancaster, York

PO Box 817
833 Pageland Highway
Lancaster, SC 29721
Phone: (803) 286-9948
Fax: (803) 286-5418
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-867-3886

Region 3 (continued)

Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Richland

2000 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29204
Phone: (803) 576-2749
Fax: (803) 576-2993
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-554-9915

Region 4

Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Sumter

PO Box 1628
105 North Magnolia Street
Sumter, SC 29150
Phone: (803) 773-5511
Fax: (803) 775-9941
Nights/Weekends: 1-877-831-4647

Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion

145 E. Cheves Street
Florence, SC 29506
Phone: (843) 661-4830
Fax: (843) 661-4859
Nights / Weekends: (843) 660-8145

Region 5

Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg

PO Box 1126
1550 Carolina Avenue
Orangeburg, SC 29116
Phone: (803) 533-7199
Fax: (803) 533-7134
Nights / Weekends: (803) 954-8513

Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell

1680 Richland Avenue, W. Suite 40
Aiken, SC 29801
Phone: (803) 642-1618
Fax: (803) 643-8386
Nights / Weekends: (803) 827-8668 or
1-800-614-1519

Region 6

Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg

1931 Industrial Park Road
Conway, SC 29526-5482
Phone: (843) 915-8804
Fax: (843) 365-0085
Nights / Weekends: (843) 381-6710

Region 7

Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester

4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600
N. Charleston, SC 29405
Phone: (843) 746-3860
Fax: (843) 746-3851
Nights / Weekends: (843) 219-8470

Region 8

Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper

219 S. Lemacks Street
Walterboro, SC 29488
Phone: (843) 549-1516, x-214
Fax: (843) 549-6845
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-614-4698

DHEC Bureau of Disease Control

Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology

1751 Calhoun Street
Box 101106
Columbia, SC 29211
Phone: (803) 898-0861
Fax: (803) 898-0897
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902



www.scdhec.gov

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.