



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P.O. Box 3378
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96801-3378

June 9, 2009

MEDICAL ADVISORY: Community Mitigation and Revised Influenza RT-PCR Prioritization

Dear Hawai'i Healthcare Provider,

Investigative data indicate ongoing community transmission of both seasonal and (swine-origin) novel influenza A (H1N1) in Hawai'i. As we transition to focused influenza testing of priority groups, the Hawai'i Department of Health (HDOH) asks providers to use appropriate clinical judgment in determining whether their patients have influenza and to promote the following measures proven effective in reducing influenza transmission.

Recommended Measures to Reduce Influenza Transmission

For all patients who fulfill **influenza-like illness (ILI)** criteria of fever ≥ 100 °F [37.8 °C] AND cough or sore throat in the absence of another known cause, the following is advised:

- **Exclusion from work or school for 7 days or 24 hours post resolution of fever without antipyretic, or whichever is longer, regardless of antiviral treatment¹**
- Frequent hand washing or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizing gel
- Covering their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing

HDOH recommends that providers revert to the following baseline influenza testing prioritization used previous to the current novel H1N1 situation (i.e., enhanced H5N1 surveillance).

Revised Influenza Testing Prioritization²

Includes persons who fulfill ILI criteria and are in at least one of the following categories:

- Severely ill and require hospitalization
- Potentially at high risk for complications³
- Have a history of travel outside the United States in the 10 days preceding illness onset
- Work in high risk occupations, e.g. health care workers engaged in direct patient care
- Are part of outbreak investigation as identified by HDOH Disease Investigation Branch

¹ There are little and conflicting data to support otherwise; time period may be shortened only if proven negative for influenza by RT-PCR or an etiology other than influenza is laboratory confirmed.

² Influenza Sentinel Network Providers should continue testing based on routine Sentinel Surveillance protocols; specimens collected by these providers will continue to receive priority testing status.

³ Includes those who are age <5 or >64 years; have chronic pulmonary (e.g. asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, hematological (including sickle cell disease), neurologic, neuromuscular, or metabolic (including diabetes mellitus) disorders; are immunosuppressed, including secondary to medication or HIV; are pregnant; are age <19 years and on chronic aspirin therapy; or are residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities.

All subtyping, including novel influenza A(H1N1), at the State Laboratories Division will be prioritized based on the above criteria. In addition, clinicians should note the following:

- Notify HDOH of persons meeting priority testing criteria at the time of the initial patient visit by calling the appropriate number listed below.
- Include with laboratory submissions any information pertinent to verifying that specimens fulfill priority criteria.
- Contact your respective clinical laboratory for test results as these will not be directly available from HDOH.
- Routine novel H1N1 or other subtyping will no longer be performed for non-priority specimens.
- Contact HDOH if you would like to discuss testing of non-priority group patients.

Clinicians should not await RT-PCR results to empirically treat with appropriate antivirals patients who are severely ill and/or at high risk for complications.

If you have questions about or need to report a suspect case that meets priority criteria, please contact HDOH at the numbers below:

O‘ahu (Disease Investigation Branch) (808) 586-4586
Maui District Health Office (808) 984-8213
Kaua‘i District Health Office..... (808) 241-3563
Big Island District Health Office (Hilo) (808) 933-0912
Big Island District Health Office (Kona)..... (808) 322-4877

After hours on O‘ahu (808) 566-5049
After hours on neighbor islands..... 1(800) 360-2575 (toll free)

We appreciate the partnership with the medical community in facilitating community mitigation of both seasonal influenza and novel influenza A (H1N1) infections in Hawai‘i.

Sincerely,



Sarah Y. Park, MD, FAAP
State Epidemiologist