

MLS Laboratory Update: Changes to the Influenza Surveillance Program

APRIL 7TH, 2026

Purpose of this Message:

This communication is to notify submitters to programmatic changes to the influenza surveillance program.

Change effective April 9, 2026

Beginning April 9, 2026, MDH-PHL will **no longer return patient-level results** for specimens submitted as part of **influenza surveillance testing**. Specimens submitted for influenza surveillance will not be considered diagnostic, and individual patient influenza typing or subtyping results will not be routinely returned to submitting facilities. MDH-PHL will share aggregate summary data with submitters on a regular basis.

Action Items:

- Please review this message and share it with appropriate staff at your facility.
- Identify the appropriate contact(s) at your facility to receive aggregate influenza surveillance summary results by completing the following survey: [Contacts for Aggregate Influenza Surveillance Reports \(https://forms.office.com/g/SC0u7JvLeb\)](https://forms.office.com/g/SC0u7JvLeb).

Background:

After a routine review of the influenza surveillance program and CLIA specimen transport temperature requirements, MDH-PHL is updating our processes for **influenza surveillance specimens**. These specimens will **not** be considered diagnostic, and submitters will no longer receive patient-level subtyping results. **MDH-PHL will be providing aggregate data**, on at least a monthly basis, during the respiratory season. This report will include the number of specimens submitted from your facility, positivity rate, and subtypes detected.

In the event that **MDH-PHL identifies a variant influenza virus** in a specimen submitted for surveillance (e.g. **H5N1, H3v, etc.**), MDH-PHL will follow up with submitters to provide these results to patients.

Additional Information:

Submission forms can be found on the [MDH-PHL forms page \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/forms.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/forms.html). **Please review the forms and details below for influenza surveillance and diagnostic requests.**

- **Influenza Surveillance Submission Form:** use this form for both hospitalized and non-hospitalized patients.
 - Please indicate whether the patient is hospitalized or non-hospitalized.
 - **Reminder** that during the respiratory surveillance season MDH-PHL is only requesting routine submission on hospitalized patients.
- **Influenza/SARS-CoV-2 Diagnostic Submission Form:** use this form for diagnostic testing requests for seasonal influenza or COVID-19
- **General Infectious Disease Laboratory Test Request Form:** use this form for suspect H5 diagnostic testing requests and indicate in the Submitting Lab comment box that you are “**requesting H5 testing**”.

Questions: Please contact:

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PLEASE FORWARD THIS TO ALL APPROPRIATE PERSONNEL WITHIN YOUR INSTITUTION AND HEALTH SYSTEM

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5200.