

MLS Laboratory Update: Laboratory Submissions for 2024 – 2025 Viral Respiratory Season

OCTOBER 2, 2024

Purpose of this Message:

Provide guidance to clinical laboratory partners for submission of clinical samples for seasonal respiratory disease surveillance.

Action Item:

Review the information for the 2024-2025 respiratory season, including specimen stability and transport conditions and the updated number of weekly specimen submissions requested for influenza, SARS-CoV-2, and RSV.

Background:

The Minnesota Department of Health conducts respiratory disease surveillance each season through case reporting and laboratory submission pathways. The specimens that clinical laboratory partners send to the Minnesota Department of Health Public Health Laboratory (MDH-PHL) are an essential part of the program and allow for genotyping, subtyping and further characterization of influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and SARS-CoV-2. Last year, MDH-PHL began sequencing influenza and RSV, in addition to SARS-CoV-2.

At the beginning of each season, MDH-PHL provides guidance on appropriate media types, shipping conditions, and the ideal number of specimens required for each virus-specific laboratory surveillance program. Specimen collection media and stability along with disease-specific guidance on specimen submission is found below.

Additional Information:

Specimen Collection and Transport:

- Specimens may be submitted in a viral transport media (VTM) (e.g., VTM, M4, M5, or M6), universal transport media (UTM), saline, phosphate buffered saline (PBS), or liquid Amies.
- Samples stored at refrigerated temperature have been demonstrated to be stable for 3 days post-collection. Frozen samples are stable to 7 days post-collection. Refrigerated samples must be received by MDH PHL within 3 days of collection and within 7 days if shipped frozen.

Influenza Specimen Submission:

Laboratory surveillance - Laboratories should submit **ten** patient specimens that are positive for influenza (either A or B) each week for surveillance purposes. Please use one of the following forms:

- For hospitalized patients with cases of confirmed influenza or influenza like illness, use the [Influenza Hospitalized Surveillance \(1492\) Submission Form](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/mdhfluform1492.pdf) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/mdhfluform1492.pdf>)
- For influenza and influenza-like illness case investigations **directed by MDH epidemiology staff**, use the [Influenza Non-Hospitalized Surveillance \(493\) Submission Form](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/mdhfluform493.pdf) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/mdhfluform493.pdf>)

SARS-CoV-2 and RSV Submission:

Laboratory surveillance - Laboratories performing RSV and COVID-19 rapid testing methods (rapid antigen or molecular assays) should submit up to 40 patient samples per week.

- To submit SARS-CoV-2 specimens for laboratory surveillance, use the [COVID-19 Special Request Form](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/mdhcovidspecial.pdf) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/mdhcovidspecial.pdf>)
- To submit RSV specimens for laboratory surveillance, use the [General Infectious Disease Laboratory Submission Form](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/mdh_lab_submission.pdf) (https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/idlab/mdh_lab_submission.pdf) and select 'RSV Sequencing – RSVSEQ' from the Virology Test Requested section of the form.

General Notes:

- Please ensure that all submitted specimen remnants meet submission guidance found within the [Infectious Disease Laboratory Test Catalog](https://labinventory.web.health.state.mn.us/#/) (<https://labinventory.web.health.state.mn.us/#/>) It is not necessary to perform recollection on patients when remnant specimen do not meet submission guidance.
- The guidance found here is intended for laboratory specimen submissions only. Specific respiratory disease case reporting rules and guidance can be found within the [MDH Respiratory Illness Page](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/respiratory/index.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/respiratory/index.html>)
- Complete forms electronically, then print and include with shipment. This will ensure that we are receiving the most up-to-date submission form via the links provided above and prevent possible delay in processing specimens.
- Please include testing results, methods used (DFA, rapid EIA, PCR, etc.) and name of test kit(s) in the comment section at the bottom of the form.
- MDH-PHL offers the option to make submissions and testing requests electronically including a batch order option for facilities that choose to submit specimens weekly.

Additionally, using this submission portal allows for secure, electronic delivery of results. If interested, please contact MDH-PHL using the contact information found below.

Questions: Please contact: Scott Cunningham, Virology Unit Supervisor; 651-201-5032 or Scott.Cunningham@state.mn.us or Dr. Anna Strain, Infectious Disease Laboratory Manager; 651-201-5035 or anna.strain@state.mn.us

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