

Dear Colleagues:

We would like to thank you for your participation in the surveillance for the novel H1N1 influenza virus during these past two weeks. We know that you have all been overrun with specimens as have we. We will no longer test those samples that are influenza A+ except those that meet the following criteria and have been approved by your Local Health Jurisdiction:

- Unexplained deaths possibly due to influenza A
- Hospitalized patients with severe respiratory illness and a positive flu A test
- Outpatients with influenza like illness (ILI) and a positive flu A test with one of the following criteria:
 - Children <5 years old
 - Adults >65 years old
 - Healthcare workers or
 - Pregnant women.

Nasal pharyngeal, nasal or throat swabs in viral transport medium must arrive refrigerated at the Washington State Public Health Laboratories within 72 hours of collection. They should be shipped on cold packs.

Please include the DOH virology submission slip which can be found at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehsphi/epidemiology/cd/swineflu/virh1n1form.pdf> it has been specifically designed for our current influenza surveillance. If you need technical assistance or have specific questions, please contact Yolanda Houze at 206-418-5471, Denny Russell at 206-418-5562, or Beth Wieman at 206-418-5458. Thank you, again, for your patience as we all work through this together.