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Dear Doctors, Laboratory Directors, and other mandated reporters:

Effective December 1, 2014, the Los Angeles County (LAC) Department of Public Health (DPH) is adding severe respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) disease in children less than 5 years old to its list of reportable diseases and conditions, by the authority of the Health Officer under the California Code of Regulations, Title 17, Section 2500. Physicians, nurses, coroners and all other healthcare providers who are legally mandated to report diseases are hereby ordered to report severe RSV disease in children less than 5 years old to LAC DPH. Severe RSV disease is defined as children who died or were admitted to the ICU as a direct or indirect consequence of laboratory confirmed RSV infection. Laboratory confirmation includes positive results from rapid tests, culture, polymerase chain reaction or other methods. Cases must be reported within 7 working days using the confidential morbidity report (CMR), available on the LAC DPH website at: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/reports/CMR-H-794.pdf>. Forms may be faxed to the Communicable Disease Reporting System at 1-888-397-3778 or electronically submitted via visual CMR.

This new reporting requirement will contribute to improved prevention of RSV infection and its consequences in children. RSV is a leading cause of respiratory disease morbidity and mortality among infants and young children directly and as a consequence of secondary infections. Additional information on severe RSV disease will provide the information needed to assess and improve recommendations for prevention using monoclonal antibodies and contribute to monitoring when a vaccine is licensed. While some laboratory based surveillance data currently are collected, the information is insufficient for these purposes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention supports this new reporting standard and LAC data will contribute to national recommendations for treatment and prevention of RSV.

Effective implementation of these reporting requirements will provide key data for LAC to improve the health of children in the County and nationwide. We urge you to develop a system to support this mandatory reporting and achieve the high sensitivity needed for the data to be most useful.

For questions about respiratory surveillance in LAC, please visit our website at: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Flu.htm>.

Sincerely,

Laurene Mascola, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.A.P.
Chief, Acute Communicable Disease Control Program

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