



## CDPH Health Update

### Request to Submit Specimens from Patients Receiving Intensive Care for Influenza A to Public Health Laboratories

June 22, 2023

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In response to the global outbreak in birds of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) A(H5N1), the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has issued a Health Update encouraging providers to test for influenza this summer among persons with severe respiratory illnesses or who are exposed to poultry and swine. This communication includes the following testing recommendations:

- Healthcare providers should always consider influenza testing, including subtyping, for patients with respiratory illness who are at higher risk for contracting novel or variant influenza, such as those exposed to wild birds, poultry, or swine, which may occur more often during agricultural fair season.
- Throughout the year, any samples that are influenza A positive and for which subtyping was attempted but did not identify a seasonal influenza subtype should be reported to Public Health and urgently directed to a local public health laboratory for additional testing.
- In addition, during June through September 2023, **influenza A positive samples from patients in the intensive care unit (ICU) not subtyped in clinical laboratories are requested to be submitted a local public health laboratory for influenza A subtyping**. This is an important step for continued surveillance of A(H5N1), as well as for enhanced detection of novel or variant influenza cases.

Although HPAI A(H5N1) is believed to pose a low risk to the health of the general public, human infection has already taken place, and surveillance is extremely important for public health.

**In LA County, providers should contact Public Health immediately if they suspect human infection with any novel influenza A virus.** This includes any patient meeting either of following criteria:

1. Has a positive influenza A test for which subtyping was attempted but did not identify a seasonal influenza subtype
2. Is in the ICU and had a positive influenza A sample that was not subtyped.

*Los Angeles County DPH Acute Communicable Disease Control:*

- Weekdays 8:30 am–5:00 pm: call 213-240-7941.
- After-hours: call 213-974-1234 and ask for the physician on call.

*Long Beach Health and Human Services:*

- Weekdays 8:00 am-5:00 pm: call 562-570-4302.
- After hours: call the duty officer at 562-500-5537.

*Pasadena Public Health Department:*

- Weekdays 8:00 am-5:00 pm: call 626-744-6089.
- After hours: call 626-744-6043.

Read the full CDPH communication [online](#).

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