



FROM: PUBLIC HEALTH and MICROBIOLOGY LABORATORY

TO: ALL HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

RE: Influenza and Respiratory Testing - Effective March 14, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

Testing for influenza serves two purposes: it is used as a means of surveillance to determine when influenza becomes established in the province, as a general guide for patient management. It is also used for diagnostic purposes in individuals in order to choose the best courses of action. Influenza is now present and established in every RHA across the province, with about 32% of NP swabs being submitted demonstrating influenza over the 4 weeks. The predominant type is H3 which is consistent with what is being reported nationally and internationally.

Given a large surge in respiratory test requests, a decision is being made to prioritize specimens.

While the PHML will continue to monitor the trend and remain vigilant, per standard practice; effective immediately, routine testing for influenza and respiratory pathogens will be scaled down with a focus on acute patient care services. This includes:

- In-patients and ER patients awaiting admission
- Children <10 years of age
- Pregnant women with respiratory tract infections
- Patients with underlying cardiovascular/respiratory risks
- Those with recent international travel history

Also note:

- Outbreak investigations will be attended to as required in collaboration with the Regional Communicable Disease Nurses and Medical Officers of Health
- Influenza stat requests will continue to be processed as clinically indicated

To better serve and facilitate the above,

IT IS CRITICAL THAT PATIENT INFORMATION AND THE TYPE OF TEST IS CLEARLY INDICATED ON THE REQUISITION OR COMMUNICATED TO THE PHML. SPECIMENS SUBMITTED WITH INSUFFICIENT OR INCOMPLETE INFORMATION WILL NOT BE TESTED.

**For additional information, contact the PHML – Miller Site
Telephone: 777-6583
Microbiologist-On-Call through hospital locating: 777-6300**

Date: March 14, 2017