

To: HEIC and CEPAR

From: Division of Medical Microbiology and the Department of Pathology (Karen Carroll, Alexandra Valsamakis, Allen Valentine)

Re: Microbiology testing for acute febrile respiratory illness

The Johns Hopkins Microbiology Laboratory is continuing to support testing for patients with symptoms of respiratory virus infection. Respiratory viruses that are currently circulating are: Parainfluenza viruses, human metapneumovirus, and influenza A.

The following information is provided for laboratory testing of patients presenting with acute febrile respiratory illness.

Appropriate specimens:

- Nasopharyngeal aspirates are preferred.
- Nasopharyngeal FLOCKED swabs are acceptable from areas not equipped with suction apparatus such as satellite clinical operations. Flocked swabs will be available from Pathology Customer Service (410-955-1921) as of 4/29/09.

Testing of Respiratory Specimens

- Nasopharyngeal aspirates: Ultra-rapid Binax testing will be performed (Turnaround time 1-2 hours). Sensitivity and specificity compared to culture DURING HIGH PREVALENCE are 75% and 98%. All positives will be confirmed by direct stain with influenza A monoclonals. All confirmed positives will be sent to State Health for further testing. Ultra-rapid negatives will be tested by direct stain for 8 different respiratory viruses (including influenza A and B) plus culture.
- Nasopharyngeal FLOCKED swabs will not be tested by Ultra-rapid Binax due to compromised sensitivity (50%). These specimens will be tested by direct stain (turnaround time 4 hours).

For patients with travel to endemic areas or contact with a confirmed swine influenza case within the last 30 days who have **acute febrile respiratory illness**, the following steps should be taken:

- Call Hospital Infection Control and Epidemiology (410-955-8384).
- Contact City Health to discuss clinical case with the city epidemiologist. If City Health Communicable Diseases cannot be reached, contact the State DHMH

Epidemiologist on call at 410-767-6700 during normal business hours and at 410-795-7365 after business hours.

- **Establishing contact with City or State Health is critical as this will establish the need for testing and its priority status at the State Health Laboratory. The Microbiology Laboratory cannot send specimens to State Health without this communication.**
- Call the Johns Hopkins Microbiology Laboratory (410-955-5077). Ultra-rapid Binax testing will be performed by the laboratory on a stat basis and the ordering clinician will be notified of the result within 1-2 hours. All samples that have been approved by City or State Health for further PCR testing will be sent to the State Health Laboratory by stat courier.