



DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Date: August 19, 2016
To: Wisconsin Clinicians, Infection Preventionists, and Local Health Departments
From: Jeffrey P. Davis, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer and State Epidemiologist for Communicable Diseases
RE: Influenza testing and variant influenza A/ virus detection

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey P. Davis', with a large blue arrow pointing to the right.

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Summary of Recommendation: Consider influenza testing among patients with acute respiratory illnesses (ARI) who report exposures to petting zoos, fairs, or farms or during slaughtering and processing activities.

Background and Recommendations

The 2016 city and county fair season in the Midwest is well underway. During recent summers, swine exhibitions at agricultural fairs and other direct or indirect exposure to swine have been associated with human infections caused by variant influenza A viruses that include A/H3N2v, A/H1N2v and A/H1N1v. Notably, since July 1, 2016, four human cases of influenza A/H3N2v infection (2 in Michigan, 2 in Ohio) have been detected in the Midwest. The Ohio patients are not related other than that both of them reported having attended the same fair in Ohio. Similarly, the Michigan patients both attended the same fair in Michigan but are otherwise unrelated to each other. In addition, two cases of A/H1N2 have also been detected in the Midwest (1 in Wisconsin and 1 in Minnesota). The Wisconsin patient with A/H1N2v infection had direct contact with ill swine on the farm where he worked, and the Minnesota patient did not identify an exposure source.

Therefore, it is important to consider influenza among patients with acute respiratory illnesses (ARI) who report direct exposure (physically touching swine) or indirect exposure (in a building that houses swine or attendance at an event where swine are present) at petting zoos, fairs, or farms or during slaughtering and processing activities.

ARI is defined as any two of the following: fever, cough, sore throat, rhinorrhea or nasal congestion. Patients who present with ARI and have known or suspected exposure to swine within one week prior to illness onset can be tested at no charge at the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) with the prior approval (see below) of the Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH).

Nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal swab specimens should be collected from these patients, placed into viral transport media and sent to the WSLH. Specimens submitted for testing must include a completed WSLH lab requisition form. The form can be accessed at the following link:
<http://www.slh.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/ReqForm-EnhancedSurv-0514.doc>.

To obtain approval of testing or if you have questions regarding this memo, please contact Thomas Haupt, Wisconsin Influenza Surveillance Coordinator, at 608-266-5326, or call the Bureau of Communicable Diseases at 608-267-9003. For after-hours approval, call the 24/7 emergency number at 608-258-0099 and ask for the communicable disease epidemiologist on call.