

# Memo

**To:** Allina Medical Laboratories Reference Lab Customer  
**From:** Bonny Paetznick, Allina Medical Laboratories Reference Lab Services Director  
**Date:** 10/2/2009  
**Re:** Novel H1N1 Testing

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With the resurgence of Novel H1N1 Influenza A, Allina Medical Laboratories is committed to offering timely updates and information regarding laboratory testing options.

Updated information for the Allina Hospitals and Clinics can be found on the AKN under the H1N1 banner.

Updated information for our non-Allina owned customers can be found on our website at [www.allina.com/medicallaboratories](http://www.allina.com/medicallaboratories).

We encourage all clients to first communicate with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) for specific guidance on how to diagnose patients with suspected novel H1N1 influenza A  
<http://health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/diseases/flu/h1n1/hcp/testing.html#test>

MDH is offering influenza A testing for certain at-risk populations, and can offer direction on which specimens they will accept for testing. Not all patient specimens may be accepted. At this time MDH testing will be limited to only hospitalized patients with influenza like illness (ILI) or swine workers with ILI.

**No testing is recommended for most ambulatory patients with mild febrile illness. Routine testing of ambulatory patients is not recommended or available from the Minnesota Department of Health.**

**At the recommendation of the Allina Clinical Leadership team, effective October 5, 2009, Allina Medical Laboratories will suspend the Influenza Antigen testing for lack of clinical applicability.**

CDC recommendations indicate that treatment should not wait for laboratory confirmation of influenza because laboratory testing can delay treatment and because a negative rapid test for influenza does not rule out influenza. CDC recommends that antiviral medications should be initiated as early as possible because studies show that treatment initiated early (i.e., within 48 hours of illness onset) is more likely to provide benefit.

## **TO SUBMIT A SPECIMEN FOR TESTING:**

Patient specimens that meet the MDH criteria for PCR testing can be sent to MDH through AML with your next available courier. No STAT courier service will be provided by AML for these specimens. NOTE: Specimens submitted to MDH that do not meet MDH criteria or are not accompanied by both completed forms listed below will be retained at the discretion of MDH. If MDH determines that these patients do not meet the established criteria, these specimens will be discarded. AML will not know the status of these specimens, and cannot respond to your questions. All follow up calls should be directed to MDH at 651-201-5414 or 1-877-676-5414.

Please use the attached workflow to guide you.

## NOVEL H1N1 TESTING GUIDE

### 1. COMPLETE FORMS

The ordering physician or provider *must* complete and submit both the

H1N1 Flu Screening form. Please use screening tool preprinted with AML fax number found on our web site to assure correct report distribution.

**AND**

MDH Request for Isolates

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/phl/clin/specimensubmission.pdf> .

### 2. SPECIMEN

The preferred specimen is a single 1 Nasopharyngeal (NP) swab. The swabs must Dacron/polyester/synthetic and *cannot* be cotton.

### 3. CONTAINER

The specimen can be transported in either M4 or M5 viral transport media.

### 4. TEST CODE

Order test Code: H1N

Name: H1N1 INFLUENZA PCR

Number: 8281

This test may be orderable in Excellian by October 6, 2009. If not orderable, order as MSO and identify H1N1 Influenza PCR. Non-Allina customers should use manual requisitions and write H1N in Additional Test Box

### 5. TRANSPORT

Specimens should be transported refrigerated. These specimens can be sent with your regular AML courier for transport to the MDH Laboratory.

### 6. REPORTS

Results will be reported through your normal report distribution process

### 7. SUPPLIES

In order to ensure adequate numbers of supplies for the testing we will be offering only limited numbers of supplies for use in collection of these specimens at this time. We will only supply 10 NP swabs and 10 M4 (Blue top) tubes/order. To expedite the distribution of these supplies, please use the attached AML Flu Supply order form and fax directly to AML. Do not use the online supply order for these flu supplies. This applies to H1N1 flu supplies only.

We will not supply any stat couriers to transport supplies to clients. Any M4 or M5 media currently in stock in your clinic can be used to transport these specimens.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact AML Customer Service at 612-863-4678, Option 1.