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TO: Local Health Departments, Regional Offices of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Infection Control Professionals, Infectious Disease Physicians, Hospital Laboratories, Laboratory Directors, Sentinel Laboratories

FROM: E. Matt Charles *SMC*
Chief, Division of Laboratories

DATE: May 6, 2016

SUBJECT: Guidance for Submitting Clinical Specimens for Zika virus testing to the IDPH Chicago Laboratory

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Division of Laboratories has started Zika testing at the IDPH Laboratory located in Chicago. This memo is being sent to provide guidance related to the submission of laboratory specimens for Zika Virus testing at IDPH.

To request testing for Zika Virus Disease:

- Hospitals and health care providers should contact their local health department to discuss authorization for testing.
- If the Local health Department (LHD) approves the specimen to be tested by IDPH, they will provide an authorization number to indicate approval.
- Specimens received by IDPH without an authorization number will not be tested.
- Zika PCR testing is also available through a national commercial reference laboratory if testing is not authorized by the LHD.

Submitting specimens for testing:

- **Do not** ship specimens to the IDPH Chicago Laboratory without the authorization number acquired from the local health department.
- The IDPH laboratory can test serum using the Trioplex rtRT-PCR and Zika IgM Assays. IDPH can also test cerebral spinal fluid (CSF), urine and amniotic fluid but serum must also be sent with those specimen types. Contact the IDPH Chicago Laboratory with questions about specimen types and requirements.
- Collect the blood in a serum separator tube (SST) and centrifuge the specimen. Store all specimens at 4°C.
- Specimens must be transported on ice packs and received at the IDPH Chicago Laboratory within 72 hours of collection. If specimens need to be held longer than 72 hours prior to shipping, they must be frozen at -70°C and shipped on dry ice.
- Schedule shipping to ensure specimens are delivered to IDPH during routine business hours (Monday through Friday). Do not schedule shipments for weekend or holiday delivery.
- Complete the **IDPH Test Request For Human Arbovirus Lab Submission Form**. Write the LHD authorization number at the top of this form. This submission form can be obtained from your LHD or IDPH. (It is no longer necessary to submit the CDC 50.34 DASH form.)

- Ship specimens to the IDPH Chicago laboratory using Category B shipping requirements.
- The IDPH Division of Laboratories offers web-based Infectious substances shipping training at <https://i.train.org>. The training is free and accessible on-line.

Results from Zika Virus Disease testing:

- Zika RT-PCR results will be reported as Zika Virus detected, Zika Virus not detected or Inconclusive. Zika IgM results will be reported as presumptive positive, negative or equivocal.
- Results will be provided to submitters and local health departments by FAX as soon as they are available. The Division of Labs is also working to send these results electronically to INEDSS. This enhancement will be available at a later date.
- The IDPH Division of Laboratories will refer Zika reactive specimens to CDC for confirmatory testing. (Confirmatory Zika test results from CDC may take up to 4-6 weeks.) The IDPH laboratory report will indicate when specimens have been referred for supplemental testing.

Contact Information for IDPH

The IDPH Division of Laboratories can be contacted during business hours at the following numbers:

- Chicago: 312-793-4760
- Springfield: 217-782-6562
- Carbondale: 618-457-5131

Medical providers and hospital staff are encouraged to contact their local health department for Zika virus inquiries.