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#### MEMORANDUM

TO: Local Health Departments and Regional Offices of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Hospital Infection Control Practitioners, Hospital Laboratories, Infectious Disease Specialists, Hospital Emergency Departments

FROM: Communicable Disease Control Section

DATE: August 1, 2013

RE: Influenza A (H3N2) Variant Virus Identified in Illinois Resident

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) laboratory has confirmed one case of the H3N2v influenza virus, which has now been reported in three states this year – Illinois, Indiana (13 total cases) and Ohio (one total case). All confirmed cases this year except for one have been in children ages 3 to 13 years and all have had direct contact with swine prior to their illness onset. The confirmed case is a Boone County child who had contact with swine while helping an exhibitor at the DuPage County Fair in late July. This child has not been hospitalized.

Most cases of H3N2v virus infection have occurred in children, who have little or no pre-existing immunity to this virus. There is no evidence thus far to indicate that human infections with H3N2v virus have resulted in sustained human-to-human transmission.

In 2012, 309 cases of H3N2v infection were detected in 12 states. Most of these infections were associated with prolonged exposure to pigs at agricultural fairs. Limited human-to-human spread of this virus has been detected in the past, but no sustained community spread of H3N2v has been identified to date.

Illnesses associated with H3N2v infection in 2012 were mostly mild with symptoms similar to those of seasonal flu. Children are believed to have little to no pre-existing immunity to this virus, while adults may have some pre-existing immunity. More severe illness can happen in persons with high risk conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, neurological or neurodevelopmental conditions and pregnancy. Also, those younger than five years or older than 65 years are also at higher risk.

#### **Testing for influenza using RT-PCR at the IDPH Division of Laboratories is recommended for:**

1. Hospitalized patients with fever and cough or sore throat AND have had contact with pigs within seven days of the onset of illness.
2. Patients with fever and cough or sore throat with either of the following
  - a. Direct contact (raising pigs, feeding pigs, cleaning pig waste or indirect exposure to pigs – visiting a pig farm, walking through a swine barn at a county fair, etc.), especially if

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- pigs were known to be ill within seven days of illness onset; or
- b. Close contact (within 2 meters or approximately 6 feet) to an ill person who had recent swine exposure within seven days of onset.

\* Note: *Negative rapid tests do not rule out H3N2v*

Clusters of influenza-like-illnesses should also be reported to the local health department for consultation regarding testing. Requests for testing will also be considered on a case by case basis in unique circumstances. Please refer to the links below for specimen submission guidelines and the Influenza disease specimen submission form.

[http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/Influenza\\_Virus\\_Specimen\\_Submission.pdf](http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/Influenza_Virus_Specimen_Submission.pdf)

[http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/laboratories/Flu-Respiratory\\_Req\\_Form.pdf](http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/laboratories/Flu-Respiratory_Req_Form.pdf)

Clinicians evaluating ill patients suspected to be cases of probable H3N2v virus infection in persons with recent exposure to swine or to an ill person who had swine exposure should obtain a nasopharyngeal swab or aspirate (or a combined nasal swab and throat swab) from the patient, place the swab or aspirate in viral transport medium, and contact their local or state public health department to arrange transport and testing for H3N2v virus at a state public health laboratory.

Respiratory specimens for H3N2v testing should ideally be obtained during the first three days after symptom onset, but may be taken up to a week after onset, or even later in children, severely ill, or immunocompromised patients. If specimen collection kits are needed, please contact your appropriate regional IDPH laboratory.

**Prior to sending specimens, approval for testing must be obtained by contacting your local health department.** The local health department will provide an authorization code that must be printed on the submission form.

*It is essential for IDPH Division of Laboratories to be notified when specimens are arriving for H3N2v influenza testing.* If you have questions about specimen submission, collection or transportation please call your appropriate regional laboratory (Chicago: 312-793-4760; Springfield: 217-782-6562; Carbondale: 618-457-5131). During non business hours please contact IEMA at 800-782-7860 and request to speak with the IDPH duty officer.

There are still quite a few fairs that have not yet taken place this year, including the Illinois State Fair August 8<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>. Local health departments are encouraged to work with the upcoming agricultural fair directors in their area to ensure signage is imposed at the fair grounds to reduce risk of influenza or enteric diseases to animal exhibitors and attendees. They may also wish to provide information on this situation to swine producers in their area if they have contact information for these individuals. Resources provided at the bottom of this memorandum may be helpful in these efforts.

## Resources

- More information about H3N2v, including CDC recommendations for treatment of suspect or confirmed H3N2v infection is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/h3n2v-cases.htm>
- Brochure (What People who Raise Pigs Need to Know about Influenza) at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/people-raise-pigs-flu.htm>
- Illinois 2013 County Fair Schedule <http://www.agr.state.il.us/fair/countyfairssched.php>
- IDPH Influenza H3N2v SharePoint page <https://dph.partner.illinois.gov/communities/communicabledisease/CDAZ/Pages/Influenza,%20H3N2v.aspx>