



September 23, 2014

Dear Health Care Providers,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the 2014 – 2015 Influenza Sentinel Program. The samples you send us allow us to monitor the prevalence, subtype and antiviral susceptibility of influenza in Alaska's communities. They also allow us to detect other viral infections that can coexist during the same time period.

ASVL will send you all the supplies and postage you need to participate. Collection and shipping instructions are on the other side of this page and additional information can be found in our Lab Service Manual at [http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Labs/Documents/publications/Lab\\_Svcs\\_Manual.pdf](http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Labs/Documents/publications/Lab_Svcs_Manual.pdf).

We are asking your facility to send **up to 10 samples per week** from patients with influenza like illness (ILI). As the season begins, we are particularly interested in samples that are from:

1. Patients who have already been vaccinated this year
2. Patients with unusual signs and symptoms in addition to ILI
3. Patients who are  $\geq 65$ , are  $\leq 2$  years of age, or those who are immunocompromised
4. Patients who are hospitalized
5. If you perform Rapid Influenza Diagnostic Tests (RIDT's) on your samples, please note the RIDT manufacturer and result on the Fairbanks Lab Request and send us positive and negative RIDT samples.

**NOTE: The ASVL Weekly Report will let you know if and when we need to target different patient groups.**

This season, ASVL is using a multiplex PCR Respiratory Viral Panel (RVP) that will simultaneously screen all samples for the following respiratory pathogens:

Three Influenza A subtypes: H1 (seasonal), H1 (2009 pandemic = swine), and H3N2	
Influenza B	Parainfluenza (subtypes 1, 2 & 3)
RSV A & B	Adenovirus (Groups B, C, & E)
Human Rhinovirus (hRV)	Human Metapneumovirus (hMPV)

The RVP results will be available within 3 days of your samples receipt at ASVL. Influenza A samples that can't be subtyped using the RVP will be sent to CDC for further testing.

At CDC's request, your influenza isolate, or what is left of the original material, may be shipped to a CDC reference lab so circulating influenza strains can be compared to the current vaccine and to monitor for antiviral resistance. These results are used by CDC and will not be returned to the individual providers.

Thank You,

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### **Your Collection Kit will include:**

1. Universal transport media (UTM)
2. Dacron nasal and nasopharyngeal swabs
3. Individual biohazard bags
4. Refrigerant gel packs
5. Shipping containers with postage-paid ASVL address labels and Diagnostic Specimen Labels.
6. A copy of the **Fairbanks Lab Request Form**.
  - The fields highlighted in yellow are required
  - The form is a fillable form and can be found on our website at:  
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Labs/Documents/publications/FbxSupplyReq.pdf>

### **Collection**

1. We are asking hospitals and clinics to send **up to 10 samples per week** from patients with ILI.
2. The preferred specimen type is a Nasopharyngeal Swab (NP)
  - Other specimen types are acceptable and are listed in the drop-down box on the Lab Request Form.
3. After culturing the patient, place the swab into the Universal Transport Medium (UTM).
4. Be sure to break the swab's shaft off short enough so you can screw the cap down completely.
5. If you have a wash or lavage, aseptically transfer up to 3 ml into the UTM vial.
6. If you submit tissue, transfer a pea sized piece (approximately 1 gram) into the UTM.
7. Label the vial with the patient's name, DOB, date collected and your facilities name.

### **Shipment**

1. To decrease the chance of the sample leaking in transit: (*Leaking samples are unsatisfactory*)
  - Be sure the cap is twisted down completely & tape or paraffin the lid to the vial.
  - Place the vial inside the biohazard bag provided and zip the bag shut.
  - Package as a Biological Substance Category B UN3373
2. Place the completed ASVL Lab Request Form in the outer pouch of the biohazard bag.
3. Keep the specimen refrigerated until it is shipped; it's also acceptable to freeze the sample (in a frost-free freezer) and send the sample frozen.
4. Put all specimens in an insulated shipping container, place a (frozen) refrigerant gel pack on top of the specimens, and seal the box.
5. Ship specimens early in the week (Monday or Tuesday) so they don't sit unrefrigerated over the weekend.
6. Put a prepaid ASVL address label and a Diagnostic Specimen Label on the box before mailing.
5. ASVL will return an empty shipping container to you with another postage-paid label.

**Please call ASVL at 907-371-1000 for additional supplies or questions about testing.**

***Thank you for helping to provide influenza surveillance in the State of Alaska.***