



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & WELFARE
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER – GOVERNOR
RICHARD M. ARMSTRONG – DIRECTOR

CHRISTOPHER L. BALL, PH.D., HCLD(ABB) – BUREAU CHIEF
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Bureau of Laboratories
2220 Old Penitentiary Road
Boise, ID 83712
PHONE 208-334-2235
FAX 208-334-4067

October 3, 2016

SUBJECT: Idaho Influenza Surveillance and Solicitation of Specimens

The Idaho Bureau of Laboratories (IBL) continues to serve as a World Health Organization (WHO) Influenza Collaborating Laboratory providing influenza surveillance on behalf of CDC for the State of Idaho. Surveillance is performed for the following reasons: to detect the frequent genetic and antigenic shifts in these viruses; to rapidly identify the appearance of novel strains; to detect the emergence of antiviral resistance; and to provide the information needed to formulate vaccine components each year.

IBL is once again asking our partners in the medical community to participate in surveillance by submitting a subset of respiratory specimens to us throughout the season. IBL performs RT-PCR for rapid identification of influenza A and B, identification of Influenza A subtypes including seasonal and novel varieties, and Influenza B lineage genotyping. Our testing algorithm includes antiviral resistance studies, viral culture to obtain influenza isolates for antigenic studies performed at the CDC, and testing for non-influenza respiratory viruses.

Nasopharyngeal (NP) and/or nasal swabs submitted in viral transport media are the specimens of choice; however, a complete list of acceptable specimens is found on the IBL Influenza Submittal Form:

http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Health/Labs/Influenza_Test_Request_Form.pdf

The form can also be downloaded from the IBL website at www.statelab.idaho.gov.

Respiratory surveillance testing is free of charge, and an account number for free shipping can be provided upon request. Influenza collection kits consisting of swabs, transport media and submittal forms can be ordered at no charge on the state lab website or by using this link: <http://keysurvey.com/f/1007823/127c/>. If you would like more information about participating in the Idaho influenza surveillance program, please contact the IBL Influenza testing group at 208-334-0594. To learn more about influenza activity in the state, visit <http://flu.idaho.gov>.

Vonnita Barton,
Clinical Section Manager
bartonv@dhw.idaho.gov