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PCR-CONFIRMED INFLUENZA TYPE A IDENTIFIED IN WASHOE COUNTY

The Health District's Communicable Disease Program has received the first reports of PCR-confirmed influenza in Washoe County for this season. Three specimens submitted to the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory were positive for influenza type A by reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR). One was identified as 2009 H1N1 and two were identified as seasonal influenza A (H3). All three specimens were collected by local emergency departments during CDC week 45 (week ending November 13, 2010) and were collected from children less than two years of age. Although these are the first PCR-

confirmed cases, an additional four cases that were rapid test positive for influenza type B had been reported previously; however no PCR-confirmed influenza type B has been reported as yet this season (Table 1).

Influenza is a reportable disease as defined in Nevada Administrative Code 441A. Washoe County health care providers must report influenza cases with a positive laboratory test (including rapid tests performed in the office or lab) by faxing reports to (775) 328-3764 or by calling the Communicable Disease Program at (775) 328-2447.

Table 1 Lab-confirmed influenza cases reported by type and subtype, Washoe County, 2010-11 Influenza Season

Influenza A (2009 H1N1)	Influenza A (Seasonal H1)	Influenza A (Seasonal H3)	Influenza A Unsubtyped	Influenza B	Influenza Type Unknown	Total
1	0	2	1	4	0	8

WASHOE COUNTY INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

The Washoe County Health District (WCHD) continued limited influenza surveillance from June through September with four local emergency departments reporting on a weekly basis. Enhanced influenza surveillance resumed on October 3, 2010, and will continue through May, 2011.

Goals of the program are to:

- ♦ Characterize the prevailing strains of influenza in the community,
- ♦ Measure the impact of the disease in the community, and
- ♦ Obtain and disseminate information regarding influenza activity to health care providers, the public and those concerned with control measures.

The influenza surveillance program consists of five major components:

- 1) Weekly reports of influenza-like illness (ILI) to the Communicable Disease Program by selected sentinel health care providers. Eight sentinel providers have agreed to participate this season. They include four hospital emergency departments, two family practice offices, one student health service, and one pediatric office:
 - ♦ Dr. Emily Smith
 - ♦ Family Medicine Associates
 - ♦ Northern Nevada Medical Center
 - ♦ Renown Medical Group Pediatrics
 - ♦ Renown Regional Medical Center
 - ♦ Renown South Meadows Medical Center
 - ♦ Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center
 - ♦ UNR Student Health Center

Each site sends weekly reports tallying the numbers of patients who meet the case definition of ILI and the total numbers of patients seen at that site for any reason. The case definition for ILI is fever ($\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ [37.8°C], oral or equivalent) AND cough and/or sore

throat (in the absence of a KNOWN cause other than influenza). Patients who meet the case definition but have diagnostic tests to confirm another cause (e.g., a positive strep or RSV test) are not counted as ILI.

- 2) The collection of a limited number of specimens by sentinel health care providers from persons with ILI. The purpose of the laboratory component is to monitor when influenza arrives in the community and verify which type of influenza viruses are circulating.
- 3) Monitoring of influenza/pneumonia mortality through death certificates. Deaths due to pneumonia and influenza (P&I deaths) are reported weekly as a proportion of all deaths recorded in Washoe County. The number of P&I deaths each week are compared to national levels, as well as to the number that would be expected in the absence of an influenza epidemic.
- 4) Health care providers, school nurses and extended care facilities who see an unusually high incidence of ILI in their setting are encouraged to report to the Health District by calling (775) 328-2447.
- 5) Syndromic surveillance systems which monitor real-time visits for respiratory illnesses as their chief complaints at five emergency departments, near real-time over-the-counter sales for cough &/or cold remedies, and real-time REMSA calls for respiratory illnesses.

The information collected is reported weekly and can be accessed at the following website:

<http://www.washoecounty.us/health/cdpp/is.html>. For additional information, please contact Denise Stokich at (775) 328-6188. Multiple, ready-to-print influenza patient education materials are available on the following website:
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/index.htm>.

Please share this information with all physicians/staff in your facility/office.