

MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM



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****ADVISORY – Important Information****

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TO: All HAN Recipients

FROM: Dr. Sheila Pinette, Maine CDC Director
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SUBJECT: **Influenza Arrives in Maine - 2013**

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Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)

Influenza Arrives in Maine - 2013

Influenza has officially arrived in Maine. Maine's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) detected the first positive influenza A virus by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) late last week. The patient was an unvaccinated adult from Kennebec County with multiple underlying conditions who did not have any recent travel, did not require hospitalization, and is recovering at home. The virus was typed as an Influenza A (2009 H1N1) strain. Influenza A (2009 H1N1), influenza A (H3), and influenza B are all currently circulating nationally. The 2013-2014 trivalent influenza vaccine contains components of all three strains (H1, H3 and B) and is likely to offer good protection. The 2013-2014 quadrivalent vaccine contains an additional B strain.

Recommendations for this influenza season include:

Diagnosis: Clinicians should consider influenza in the differential diagnosis of febrile respiratory illnesses in patients of any age, encourage their patients to be immunized against influenza if they have not already done so, and review updated recommendations of the use of antiviral medications for influenza prophylaxis and treatment.

Treatment: Oseltamivir and zanamivir are the two drugs currently recommended for treatment and prophylaxis. Providers will be notified through the health alert network if national recommendations for treatment and prophylaxis are revised.

Laboratory: Diagnostic labs should forward the first ten positive rapid influenza test specimens to HETL for confirmatory PCR. Testing through HETL is free of charge. Instructions on submitting specimens for flu testing can be found at: http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/public-health-systems/health-and-environmental-testing/micro/submitting_samples.htm

Reporting: Infection preventionists, clinicians, school nurses and other reporting entities must report all suspected outbreaks of influenza to Maine CDC by phone at 1-800-821-5821 or by e-mail at disease.reporting@maine.gov. Maine CDC appreciates all reports of positive influenza tests by any testing method either by phone (1-800-821-5821) or fax (1-800-293-7534).

Vaccination: The best way to prevent influenza is by getting vaccinated and Maine CDC and national authorities recommend all individuals older than 6 months be immunized, even if they were vaccinated for influenza last season. All individuals with high risk conditions should be vaccinated as soon as possible. Influenza vaccine is available in Maine right now.

Prevention: As we enter the influenza season, it is important to remember the "No Flu 4 You" guidelines to help prevent illness including: Wash your hands; cover your cough; stay home when you're sick; and get vaccinated.

For up-to-date information/recommendations on influenza for health professionals, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals>

For surveillance information in Maine, go to www.maineflu.gov