

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

Please distribute to all physicians at this fax.

Date: October 28, 2009
To: All Alberta Physicians
From: AHS Laboratory Pandemic Communication Centre
AHS Emergency Coordination Centre (AHSECC)
Re: **Restriction of Influenza and Respiratory Virus Testing in Community Settings**

Key Messages:

- ProVLab is receiving extremely high volumes of respiratory swabs. Testing capability is being overwhelmed.
- Currently over 50% of respiratory swabs are testing positive for Pandemic (H1N1) 2009.
- AHS Laboratories must ensure that essential laboratory services are provided for Albertans during the course of the pandemic.
- **Effective immediately, testing for influenza and other respiratory viruses will NOT be accepted and performed on *samples from community settings*.**

Why this is important to Alberta Physicians?

- ProVLab must preserve resources to maintain testing for hospitalized patients with severe illness, the Tarrant Flu Watch program, and MOH investigated outbreaks.

Action Required:

- Physicians should stop submitting swabs for influenza and respiratory virus testing of patients in the community with mild to moderate disease.
- For extenuating circumstances or clinical presentations where testing may be required, please consult with the virologist-on-call at ProVLab.

For additional information:

Contact the virologist-on-call (VOC):

Edmonton Laboratory 780-407-7121

Calgary Laboratory 403-944-1200

For more information visit the website: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/660.asp>
Or contact: AHS.ECC@albertahealthservices.ca

Physician Urgent: Restriction of Influenza and Respiratory Virus Testing in Community Settings
Issued by: AHSLPCC and AHSECC
Approved by: Senior Physician Executive and AHSECC

October 28, 2009