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Enhanced Surveillance for Novel Swine-Origin Influenza H3N2

Dear Orange County Hospital Emergency Departments, Intensive Care Units, Urgent Cares, Outpatient Clinics, Laboratories, and Infection Prevention Departments:

Orange County Public Health is working with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) to enhance surveillance for novel influenza.

Circulation of a novel swine-origin triple reassortant H3N2 influenza (S-OtrH3N2) virus infecting humans has been reported in five states, including Pennsylvania, Indiana, Maine, Iowa and most recently West Virginia. Since July 2011, a total of 11 cases have been identified. Almost all cases have occurred in children, with a median age of three years (range 11 months-58 years). Three had underlying chronic medical illnesses and were hospitalized; all have recovered. Of the 11 cases, six had either direct or indirect exposure to swine, while investigation of another five cases has suggested transmission by person-to-person contact. To date, these viruses appear to be resistant to amantadine and rimantadine and susceptible to the neuraminidase inhibitor drugs [oseltamivir (Tamiflu ®) and zanamivir (Relenza ®)].

Orange County needs your assistance in monitoring for the circulation of this virus locally, and if identified, characterizing which populations are affected and who might be at greatest risk for severe disease.

We are requesting that Orange County Emergency Departments, Intensive Care Units, Urgent Cares, Outpatient Clinics and Infection Prevention Departments:

- Test patients, especially children (≤ 18 years of age), meeting the influenza-like illness (ILI) definition (fever of 100°F or higher accompanied by a cough, sore throat, or both) for influenza;
- Report to Public Health (714-834-8180) immediately with any outbreaks or clusters of ILI, any deaths in patients with ILI, and any critically ill patients (admitted to intensive care) < 65 years of age with suspect influenza.

We are requesting that Orange County Laboratories:

- Save influenza-positive specimens for further characterization at the Orange County Public Health Laboratory;
- Refer to attached instructions for specimen submission.

For more information about this enhanced surveillance, call Public Health Epidemiology at 714-834-8180.

For more information about the novel swine-origin H3N2, see www.cdc.gov/flu/swineflu/.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Michele Cheung, MD MPH
Deputy Medical Director, Epidemiology