

Email sent via Laboratory Quality Assurance distribution list

Date: December 18, 2016

Subject: Flu Reporting Requirements

Dear Laboratory Directors/Managers,

Now that we are upon the 2016-17 Influenza season, I am writing to ensure that all Laboratory Directors and Managers are aware of the Washington State notifiable condition reporting requirements as they pertain to influenza. Reporting is mandated under Washington State Administrative Code ([WAC](#)) [246-101](#) (<http://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=246-101>). As many of you recall, influenza reporting requirements were modified several times during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, leading to some confusion regarding what is presently reportable. So, for Laboratories:

At this time, only novel or unsubtypeable influenza viruses are immediately reportable to local health jurisdictions via WAC 246-101, with specimen submission required.

This seems confusing to be immediately notifiable when it takes some time to work up or suspect a novel or unsubtypeable virus. Many of your labs do not subtype influenza viruses so you will have no way to know which specimens may be novel or unsubtypeable. My interpretation of this requirement is that not all flu results are mandated to be reported unless a LHJ asks for this beyond the state requirements, or when/if a novel or unsubtypeable virus is suspected or encountered, we should report this immediately. Health care providers and facilities (not Laboratories) have additional requirements for reporting influenza deaths in addition to novel or unsubtypeable viruses.

For your interest, I have included a link to the flu report from DOH:

The Washington State Department of Health [Influenza Update](#) for week 48 (week ending December 3, 2016) is available at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/5100/420-100-FluUpdate.pdf>

Note that influenza reports will be released on Monday afternoons for the 2016-2017 influenza season.

Flu activity is low but increasing

- Three lab-confirmed influenza deaths have been reported for the 2016-2017 season to date.
- During week 48, 34 out of 431 specimens (7.9%) tested by the World Health Organization/National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (WHO/NREVSS) collaborating laboratories in Washington were positive for influenza, eighteen influenza A (H3N2), sixteen influenza A (not subtyped) and two influenza B.
- During week 48, the proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 0.7 percent, below the baseline of 1.1 percent.
- Influenza is characterized as local in Washington.

Historic influenza reports and DOH influenza information for healthcare providers and public health

- Historic influenza reports from past seasons are available [here](#).
- Influenza information for healthcare providers and public health professionals is available [here](#).

Again, thanks for your critical role in reporting diseases in Washington State.

Sincerely,

Scott

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