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**SUBJECT:** Idaho Influenza Surveillance and Solicitation of Clinical Specimens

Idaho Bureau of Laboratories (IBL) continues to serve as a World Health Organization Influenza Collaborating Laboratory providing influenza surveillance on behalf of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the State of Idaho. Surveillance is performed for the following reasons: to detect the frequent genetic and antigenic shifts in these viruses; to rapidly identify the appearance of novel strains; to detect the emergence of antiviral resistance; and to provide the information needed to formulate vaccine components each year.

IBL is once again asking our partners in the medical community to participate in surveillance by submitting a subset of respiratory specimens (approximately 5 – 10 samples per week per clinic) to us throughout the flu season. IBL accepts samples that have been previously tested for influenza (including positive and negative samples) or diagnostic samples that have not been tested. IBL performs RT-PCR for rapid identification of influenza A and B, identification of Influenza A subtypes including seasonal and novel varieties, and Influenza B lineage genotyping. Our testing algorithm also includes antiviral resistance studies, and viral culture efforts for non-influenza respiratory viruses.

Nasopharyngeal and/or nasal swabs submitted in viral transport media are the specimens of choice; however, a complete list of acceptable specimens is found on the IBL Influenza Submittal Form: [http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Health/Labs/Influenza\\_Test\\_Request\\_Form.pdf](http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Portals/0/Health/Labs/Influenza_Test_Request_Form.pdf)  
The form can also be downloaded from the IBL website at [www.statelab.idaho.gov](http://www.statelab.idaho.gov), (look under the clinical tab/submittal forms).

Respiratory surveillance testing is free of charge, and a FedEx account number for free shipping of influenza samples to IBL can be provided upon request. Influenza collection kits consisting of swabs, transport media and submittal forms can be ordered at no charge on the IBL website or by using this link: <http://keysurvey.com/f/1007823/127c/>. If you would like more information about participating in the Idaho influenza surveillance program, please contact the IBL Influenza testing group at 208-334-0594. To learn more about influenza activity in the state, visit <http://flu.idaho.gov>.

Thank you for your participation!

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