



**To: CAHAN San Diego Participants**

**Date: June 18, 2024**

**From: Public Health Services**

**Health Advisory: Influenza A Testing Guidance: Enhanced Surveillance During the Summer Months**

### Key Messages

In order to maintain awareness of influenza A subtypes circulating in California:

- Providers should test for influenza in patients with respiratory illness and relevant animal exposures that could increase risk for influenza A (H5N1), and test severely ill patients irrespective of exposure history.
- Providers should report any suspected case of novel, avian, or variant influenza.
- Clinical and commercial laboratories should submit influenza specimens to public health laboratories for subtyping.
- Any clinical specimen for which subtyping is attempted and does not identify a seasonal subtype should be immediately reported to the local health department and urgently directed to a public health lab for further testing.

### Situation

The California Department of Public Health issued a [health update](#) on June 12, 2024, recommending continued flu sample testing through the summer to maintain close monitoring of circulating influenza strains.

### Background

Due to the ongoing global outbreak of influenza A (H5N1)\* in animals, the worst domestic poultry outbreak on record has occurred. More than 90 million poultry were affected in the U.S. to date. In March 2024, the first detection of influenza A (H5N1) in dairy cattle was reported in Texas. Since then, there have been **three mild human infections**, detected in dairy farm workers, with exposure to infected dairy cattle in Texas (1) and Michigan (2). No human-to-human-transmission was associated with these cases.

Currently, influenza A (H5N1) is believed to pose a low risk to human health. The spread of avian influenza viruses from one infected person to a close contact is very rare, and when it has happened, it has only spread to a few people. Nonetheless, due to the possibility that avian influenza viruses could gain the ability to spread easily between people, monitoring for human infection is vital to protect the public's health. As such, the actions outlined below will enhance ongoing surveillance of novel influenza A in the U.S.

### Actions Requested

1. **Submit** influenza A positive samples not subtyped in clinical laboratories to local public health laboratories for influenza A subtyping from June through September 2024.
2. **Review** [CDPH Health Update](#) on continued influenza testing.
3. **Report** any suspected case of novel, avian, or variant influenza including if influenza A test when a non-seasonal influenza A subtype is reported and unsubtypeable results to County Epidemiology Unit by calling 619-692-8499 (Monday-Friday 8 AM-5 PM) or 858-565-5255 (after hours and holidays).
4. **Report** and urgently send any samples that are influenza A positive and for which subtyping was attempted but did not identify a seasonal influenza A subtype to the [San Diego County Public Health Laboratory](#).

## Resources

- [Information on Bird Flu | Avian Influenza \(Flu\) | CDC](#)
- [Strategy for Enhanced Summer 2024 Influenza Surveillance | CDC](#)

Thank you for your participation.

## CAHAN San Diego

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