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TO: All Alberta Physicians¹
FROM: André Corriveau, Chief Medical Officer of Health
**SUBJECT: Laboratory testing for patients with suspected swine-origin
Influenza A [H1N1] virus (SOIV)**

Swine-origin Influenza A [H1N1] virus (SOIV) is now displaying sustained person-to-person transmission throughout Alberta. SOIV is the primary influenza strain identified in patients with flu-like illness at this time; seasonal influenza (H1N1/Brisbane and H3N2 subtypes) have been largely displaced.

In this context, testing for the presence of SOIV will be limited to the following patients:

- ***Patients with influenza-like illness (ILI) and symptoms severe enough to require admission to hospital;***
- ***Ambulatory patients with ILI who are being considered for antiviral treatment:***
 - ***Patients with chronic cardiopulmonary conditions (including COPD and asthma)***
 - ***Patients with other risk factors for the development of more severe disease (including pregnancy, diabetes and obesity).***
- ***Residents of long term care facilities including nursing homes and lodges symptomatic with ILI.***

Note: Testing is NOT recommended for any other patients

¹ Excluding physicians involved with the Tarrant sentinel surveillance system

Acceptable respiratory specimens are:

- Nasopharyngeal swabs (flocked swab) and aspirates in universal transport media (UTM)
- Endotracheal aspirates
- Bronchoalveolar lavage
- Throat swab in UTM is an alternate to a nasopharyngeal sample

For more information, you may also contact the Virologist on Call (VOC) at the Provincial Laboratory for Public Health at (403) 944-1200 (Calgary) or (780) 407-7121 (Edmonton).

Thank you in advance.



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