

AUGUST 4, 2017

HEALTH ADVISORY

Presumptive Influenza A H3N2 Variant Positive

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) has identified one presumptive influenza A H3N2 variant positive in a person who attended the North Dakota State Fair in Minot this year. The North Dakota suspect case is currently being confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The NDDoH would like to remind clinicians to consider influenza as a possible diagnosis when evaluating patients with acute respiratory illness and agriculture or fair exposure. In recent years there has been several influenza A variant viruses circulating in the United States. Influenza A variant are viruses usually found in pigs and are called variant when they infect a human. Rapid detection and characterization of these novel influenza viruses remain important components of national efforts to prevent further cases and evaluate clinical illness associated with these viruses. The state of Ohio has reported 12 cases of variant influenza in people with contact with pigs at the Ohio state fair this year. The NDDoH offers the following recommendations for North Dakota providers:

If patients are presenting at your clinic or hospital with signs or symptoms of influenza:

- Collect a good clinical and risk history. Ask patients about any exposures to swine, including visiting agricultural venues at state and local fairs.
- Collect samples from patients with swine exposure to submit to the NDDoH Division of Microbiology. The sample should include a nasopharyngeal swab and an oropharyngeal swab, placed together in viral transport media.
- Submit samples on patients with swine exposure for testing; contact the Division of Disease Control immediately at 800.472.2180 (701.220.0819 after hours) to report possible novel flu and arrange specimen transport.
- Consider antiviral treatment with oral oseltamivir in patients with suspected or confirmed H3N2v virus infection. Antiviral treatment is most effective when started as soon as possible after influenza illness onset.

It is important to note that variant influenza may test negative, or may test positive for seasonal influenza using commercial or molecular testing methodologies. For this reason, these tests **should not** be used as screening tools for sending a specimen on to the Division of Laboratory Microbiology.

For more information, please contact Disease Control at 800.472.2180 (701.220.0819 after hours).

Categories of Health Alert messages:

- Health Alert conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
- Health Advisory provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
- Health Update provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.
- Health Information provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.

This message is being sent to local public health units, clinics, hospitals, physicians, tribal health, North Dakota Nurses Association, North Dakota Long Term Care Association, North Dakota Healthcare Association, North Dakota Medical Association, North Dakota EMS Association and hospital public information officers.