



# SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY *Messenger* Public Health Laboratory

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## October 2012

### **Influenza virus surveillance.**

The SLO Public Health Laboratory detected the first positive result by reverse-transcription PCR on the first weekday of the new surveillance year that began September 30, 2012. A patient specimen from a local hospital tested positive for A type H3 seasonal subtype virus. At the beginning of the 2012-13 influenza season the SLO Public Health Laboratory is soliciting submission of rapid-test positive specimens for surveillance testing at no charge.

### **Multi-state investigation of fungal meningitis among patients who received epidural steroid injections**

As of October 12, CDC has reported 137 cases with 12 deaths from ten states—but not California. Two days prior, CDC had reported that *Exserohilum* has been isolated from 10 of the people with meningitis and *Aspergillus* has been identified in one person with meningitis. To date, no infections linked to receiving steroid injections from contaminated lots have been identified in California. Records indicate that 515 patients in California received one or more steroid injections from potentially contaminated lots. Of the 515 patients, 437 had received epidural injections; 153 had received injections in other sites, including joints. CDC is requesting that bacterial and fungal cultures be obtained locally either in a clinical or public health laboratory and that suspect isolates be sent to CDC for confirmation of identification. If a fungus isolate is obtained for a patient that qualified for the case definition, the isolate can be referred to the SLO Public Health Laboratory at no charge for identification and possible referral to CDC laboratories. Fungal isolates that have not sporulated can be sent provided the specimen is from a case that fits the case definition: a person who received an injection of methylprednisolone produced by the New England Compounding Center (NECC) and who developed either meningitis, stroke following epidural injection, spinal osteomyelitis or epidural abscess or peripheral joint osteomyelitis or worsening inflammatory arthritis after May 21, 2012.

The CDC has posted a picture of a sporulating *Exserohilum* culture:

[http://www.cdc.gov/hai/outbreaks/images/photo-exserohilum\\_960px.jpg](http://www.cdc.gov/hai/outbreaks/images/photo-exserohilum_960px.jpg)

### **Sexually transmitted infections: Gonorrhea**

The San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory is still accepting without charge specimens for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* culture or isolates from individuals suspected to have failed antibiotic therapy..

Instructions for collection of specimens suitable for *N.gonorrhoeae* culture can be found on the SLO Public Health Laboratory website <http://www.slopublichealth.org/lab>.