



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY *Messenger* Public Health Laboratory

September 2013

Influenza Surveillance

The SLO Public Health Laboratory is screening specimens using both Reverse Transcription (RT) PCR for Influenza virus as well as the Respiratory Virus PCR Panel in an effort to determine what viruses may be circulating in the community.

With the official surveillance season beginning on September 29, SLO Public Health is soliciting the submission of rapid test-positive specimens from patients with influenza-like illness (ILI) for testing by the RT- PCR for Influenza virus at no charge. The requested submission of these specimens will allow public health officials to determine the starting point and the relative frequency of influenza transmission, and to provide guidance to the medical community regarding the efficacy of antiviral therapy.

Influenza virus activity is currently at a low level as it has been for the summer months. The SLO Public Health Laboratory participates as a member of the Respiratory Laboratory Network and is capable of detection of new influenza virus strains or variants as well as the H5N1 strain that is still causing cases in Egypt, Indonesia and other Southeast Asia countries, as well as the new H7N9 strain circulating in China.

Multi-State Cyclosporiasis Outbreak

The nationwide cyclospora outbreak has now sickened 642 people and hospitalized 41, according to the latest update by the CDC. That's an increase of 5 since last week's update, which indicates the outbreak may be slowing down. No deaths have been reported.

The number of cases in each area is as follows: Texas (282), Iowa (156), Nebraska (86), Florida (32), Wisconsin (16), Illinois (11), Arkansas (10), Georgia (5), Missouri (5), New York City (5), Kansas (4), Louisiana (3), Connecticut (2), Michigan (1), Minnesota (2), New Jersey (4), New York (2), Ohio (2), Virginia (3), California (1), New Hampshire (1), South Dakota (1), Tennessee (1), and Wyoming (1). The patient age range remains from less than one year to 92 years, with a median age of 51 years; 56 percent of infected persons are female. The case count includes anyone who became ill before 28 Jul 2013.

The cases in Iowa and Nebraska are linked to a salad mix produced by Taylor Farms de Mexico and served at Red Lobster and Olive Garden restaurants.

Public Health Laboratory website <http://www.slopublichealth.org/lab>.