



# SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY *Messenger* Public Health Laboratory

## September 2015

### Influenza 2015

The World Health Organization reports active influenza transmission in the southern hemisphere where winter is occurring, while the northern hemisphere remains at typical inter-season levels.

Western and temperate countries in **Asia** are seeing low levels of influenza activity, predominantly influenza type A (H1N1, pdm09), with some influenza B as well. Influenza activity remains at high levels in tropical Asia with influenza types A (H1N1)pdm09 and (H3N2) equally dominant during the last few weeks.

In temperate **South America**, influenza activity has been low while RSV detections have increased, with the exception of Paraguay which has decreasing RSV detection.

Influenza activity remained elevated in **South Africa** with influenza type A (H1N1)pdm09 and H3N2, and B co-circulating.

In **Australia and New Zealand**, influenza activity continues to increase and surpassed the seasonal threshold in Australia. The WHO Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System laboratories has tested more than 26,786 specimens. 1,476 were positive for influenza viruses, of which 1,084 (73.4%) were typed as influenza A and 392 (26.6%) as influenza B. Of the sub-typed influenza A viruses, 230 (39.8%) were influenza A (H1N1)pdm09 and 348 (60.2%) were influenza A (H3N2). Of the characterized B viruses, 62 (96.9%) belonged to the B-Yamagata lineage and 2 (3.1%) to the B-Victoria lineage.

These findings presage the coming influenza season for the United States. While the appearance of a new variant type A Influenza virus can occur at any time, southern hemisphere influenza activity is a reasonable predictor of the coming "Flu" season scheduled to begin October 4, 2015.

The San Luis Obispo County Public Health Laboratory is soliciting the submission of certain types of specimens collected from patients with influenza-like illness. See the notice that accompanies this issue of the *Messenger*. The laboratory performs a CDC-developed, highly sensitive and accurate reverse transcription PCR assay that is capable of detecting type A virus and type B viruses, as well as new variants of the type A virus.

**Future issues of the *Messenger* will no longer be faxed, but will be sent by e-mail and posted on the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Laboratory website [www.slopublichealth.org/lab](http://www.slopublichealth.org/lab).**

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