



# Messenger

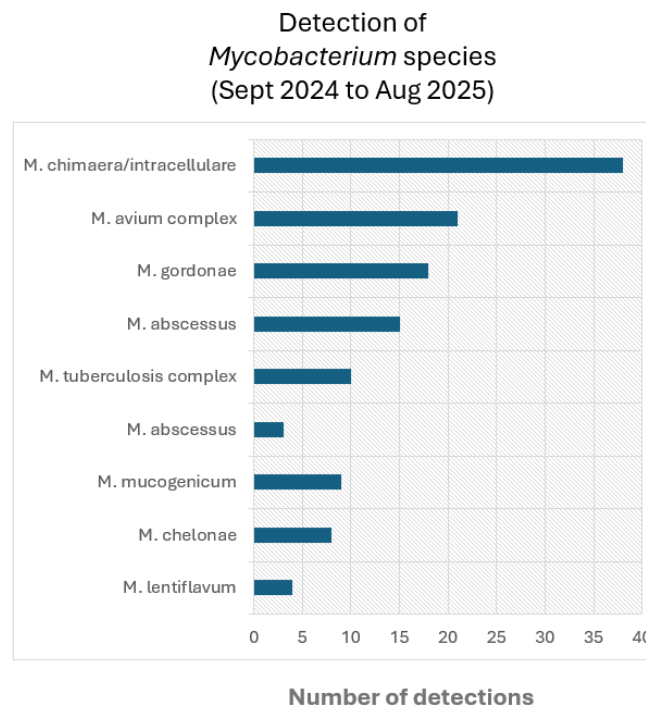
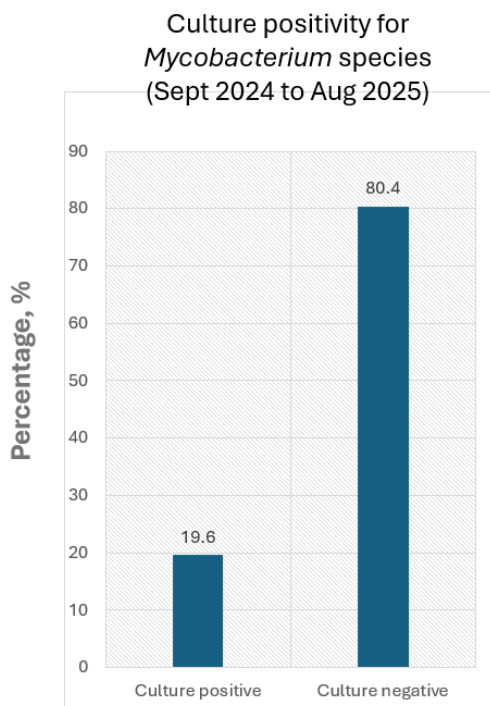
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## Mycobacterial Detection

An important activity of the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory (SLOPHL) is the ongoing detection of tuberculosis (caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex) in patients with respiratory disease. By performing this testing, the laboratory collaborates in the County's efforts to prevent and control the spread of tuberculosis within our community.

The laboratory also aids in the diagnosis of non-contagious illnesses from mycobacteria species related to tuberculosis. Infections from these other mycobacteria are typically acquired from environmental sources, such as soil and water. People with existing lung disease and those who are immuno-compromised have a higher risk of infection.

In the past year, the SLOPHL performed culture on 677 specimens submitted for mycobacterial testing. Mycobacteria were found in 19.6% of specimens, with 1.5% of specimens having *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* complex.



## Influenza Surveillance

October marks the official start of the respiratory season in the United States. Scientists often monitor activity in the southern hemisphere to predict the magnitude and severity of the influenza season in North America and Europe. Data from the 2025 winter in Australia

showed several patterns: 1) a higher incidence of influenza than the 5-year average, 2) an early peak of cases, and 3) a decline in vaccination rates.

The SLOPHL participates in ongoing influenza surveillance to determine the level and type of influenza cases in the County of San Luis Obispo. We are requesting the following submissions in the upcoming season:

- **Hospitals:** Submit specimens from patients hospitalized with influenza-like illness regardless of rapid or PCR test result. Write the dates of hospitalization on the requisition (e.g., “Admitted 12/15/25, released 12/17/25, Flu/COVID/RSV negative”).
- **Outpatient Healthcare Providers:** Submit specimens from patients with influenza-like illness and a positive influenza test. Write the rapid or PCR test result on the requisition (e.g., “Rapid A+” or “PCR B+”).

Surveillance testing, including subtyping, contributes to the state and national datasets to help understand influenza transmission, provide guidance on antiviral therapy, and inform vaccine development.

### Outbreak & Disease Update

- [Measles](#)
  - As of September 16, the U.S. has reported 1,491 cases, 181 hospitalizations, and 3 deaths from measles in 2025. Measles has spread to 42 jurisdictions ranging from Hawaii to Rhode Island, and from Texas to Alaska. 92% of cases have occurred in either unvaccinated individuals or individuals with unknown vaccination status.
  - PCR testing for measles is available at the SLOPHL, with an expected turnaround time of 1 day.
- [New World screwworm](#)
  - Contrary to what the name suggests, the New World screwworm (NWS) is actually a fly! Its name is a reference to the fly larvae’s ability to burrow into open sores and wounds, which can lead to serious skin and tissue damage as well as secondary infections. Although infestation is rare in humans, the NWS fly poses a significant threat to cattle and livestock. Mexico recently confirmed a case of NWS in a cow only 70 miles from the U.S. border.
  - The SLOPHL can provide diagnostic assistance for human infestations when suspected larvae are submitted in 70% ethanol.



### **Website Redesign**

The laboratory website has recently undergone a rebuild to improve user experience and align with accessibility requirements. Each test is linked to printable information describing the test, result availability, specimen requirements, applicable codes, and more. Visit the [laboratory's website](#) to learn more about the laboratory's menu of services.

### **Holiday Schedule**

The laboratory will be closed on the following days:

Friday, September 26—Native American Day

Tuesday, November 11—Veterans Day

### **Questions or Suggestions?**

Please contact the Laboratory Director by email or phone.

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