**To:** All D-HH Providers

**From:** Ella Martin, MD, Medical Director of Microbiology

Justin Kim, MD, Hospital Epidemiologist

**Date:** November 8, 2022

**RE:** Patient Respiratory Virus Testing During the 2022-2023 Influenza Season

We are entering the beginning of “respiratory virus season” when influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) become important concerns each year, typically starting in October or November.  **Unusually high numbers of RSV infections have been detected in recent weeks nationwide. Sporadic cases of influenza have been detected in New Hampshire and Vermont thus far.**

**Per** [**CDC guidance**](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/diagnosis/testing-guidance-for-outpatient.htm)**, testing for influenza should be limited to patients with influenza-like illness (ILI) who require hospital admission and for those select outpatients for whom test results will change patient management or for infection control reasons (e.g. residents of rehabilitation facilities and nursing homes).**

**Testing for influenza infection and other non-COVID respiratory viruses in otherwise healthy outpatients with ILI is not recommended.** Empiric influenza antiviral therapy is recommended once influenza is known to be circulating.

In light of unequal capacity for SARS-CoV-2 and influenza testing,**patients calling the COVID Hotline will not receive influenza testing unless specifically requested by an ordering provider.**

**The laboratory can test for SARS-CoV-2 and Influenza/RSV with a single NP swab.**

**The “Respiratory Panel by PCR” which tests for an expanded spectrum of possible respiratory pathogens should be ordered only on immunocompromised and/or critically ill inpatients and those being admitted from the Emergency Department. This test should not be ordered on outpatients.**

Ordering provider and hotline communications to add on influenza testing for outpatients will be done in the following ways by location:

**Lebanon Campus:**

1) Provider places an order in EPIC for “Rapid Influenza A/B and RSV PCR” [LAB4035]

AND

2) Provider sends an Inbox message to the COVID Hotline (MHMH Public Health COVID-19 Nurse Triage)

  OR

Provider calls the COVID Hotline at (603) 650-1818

\*Please ensure your patient knows they need influenza testing in addition to SARS-CoV-2 testing when they call the hotline to arrange specimen collection.\*

**CGP:**

Triage nurses follow current process for COVID testing. If patient meets criteria above and has flu-like symptoms, triage nurse will contact provider for flu swab order.

**D-HH member hospitals:**

Please follow site-specific instructions for provider communication and collection.

**For questions or additional information, please contact:** [Washyourhands@hitchcock.org](mailto:Washyourhands@hitchcock.org).