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**TO:** Local Health Departments  
Infection Control Professionals  
Wisconsin Laboratories

**FROM:** Thomas Haupt M.S.  
Wisconsin Division of Public Health

**RE:** Clarification of new reportable disease  
"Novel Influenza A Viruses"

This memo is an attempt to clarify questions regarding "Novel Influenza A viruses" that became reportable in Wisconsin on March 1, 2008. This notifiable condition pertains primarily to those laboratories that do subtyping of influenza A viruses. Most laboratories will **NOT** be affected by this new reportable disease.

**What is a novel influenza A virus?**

A human case of infection with an influenza A virus subtype that is different from currently circulating human influenza H1 and H3 viruses. Novel subtypes include, but are not limited to:

- H2, H5, H7, and H9 subtypes.
- Influenza H1 and H3 subtypes originating from a non-human species or from genetic reassortment between animal and human viruses.

**A laboratory does not do influenza subtyping. Do they need to add this test or make arrangements to send all influenza A isolates to a laboratory that does subtyping?**

No. Laboratories are encouraged to continue using current diagnostic methods and protocols.

**If a lab does not subtype influenza isolates or need to send them to a laboratory that does, how will a novel influenza virus be identified?**

Two laboratories in Wisconsin do subtyping (Wisconsin State Laboratory and Milwaukee Public Health Lab) do subtyping on a randomly selected viral specimens they receive. In addition, subtyping can be done on influenza A specimens collected from our enhanced influenza surveillance (persons returning from areas where novel viruses in humans exist) and through special requests.

**Should all influenza A cases be reported?**

No. Influenza is not a reportable disease in Wisconsin. Individual cases of influenza should not be reported to local or state public health agencies.

**Who is responsible for reporting novel influenza a viruses?**

The person who identifies and confirms the novel virus is responsible for reporting. This will likely be the laboratory where it is identified.

**Why was novel influenza A made a reportable disease?**

This was made reportable in Wisconsin for consistency with nationally reportable conditions. Novel influenza A viruses have been reportable nationally for over one year.

Please circulate this information to all healthcare facilities and other interested parties in your jurisdiction. If there are further questions or clarifications, please call me at 608-266-5326.