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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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SUSAN R. COOPER, MSN, RN
COMMISSIONER

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Dear Hospitals, Laboratories, and Providers:

As we approach the influenza season in which both seasonal and H1N1 influenza will be circulating, the State Public Health Laboratory system, in coordination with the Communicable and Environmental Diseases Section, has developed changes in testing protocols. These protocols, based on CDC recommendations, will be effective September 1, 2009.

In a large number of cases of suspected influenza, testing is unnecessary. Treatment and infection control measures should be based on clinical presentation. If indicated, treatment is most effective if initiated within 48 hours of symptom onset, well before specific laboratory testing results would be available. Testing for novel H1N1 influenza is available commercially, and health care providers are encouraged to pursue testing through those venues as appropriate.

Please see the attached guidance on H1N1 testing. These guides will be posted on both the Department of Health and State Lab website. Updates will be ongoing. If you have questions, please contact Dr. David Smalley, Director of the State Public Health Lab, at 615-262-6300 or david.smalley@tn.gov.

Best Regards,

Susan R. Cooper MSN. RN
Commissioner