SEPTEMBER 27, 2018

MONTANA LABORATORY SENTINEL

Updates from the MT Laboratory Services Bureau, 800-821-7284, www.lab.hhs.mt.gov

Influenza season is back!

Surveillance for the 2018-2019 influenza season officially begins on October 1, 2018. Receiving the first positive influenza specimens in the state is important in determining the circulating strains and prevalence. The Montana Public Health Laboratory (MTPHL) also shares these specimens with the Centers for Disease Control for further characterization and anti-viral resistance testing. We are already seeing a few positives around the state!

This season we will be conducting influenza surveillance as we did last year. We are asking our clinical laboratory partners that perform molecular testing for influenza to report their total test numbers, and the number of positives, over a secure website. These data will be aggregated and reported in the DPHHS Communicable Disease Update on a weekly basis. Molecular laboratories should be receiving more information about this reporting in the next few days. If you just recently added molecular testing for influenza, please let us know, so we can ensure your data is captured.

In addition to the molecular data, fourteen (14) hospital laboratories have been geographically selected to submit two (2) specimens per week for fee-waived surveillance testing, even if they have been confirmed by molecular methods. This surveillance allows for geographic monitoring of the circulating strains of influenza, as well as further characterization and anti-viral resistance trends in our state.

Five (5) fee-waived tests are also being offered to thirty- three (33) additional clinical laboratories from various geographic locations to be used at their discretion. These fee-waived tests are to be used to confirm the presence of circulating Influenza virus in their patient population, such as confirmation of rapid test positive specimens and confirmation of Influenza-like Illness (ILI). Special surveillance forms have been sent to these designated laboratories to facilitate submission.

In addition to our laboratory surveillance, the DPHHS Communicable Disease Epidemiology (CDEpi) section works with Sentinel providers who report, on a weekly basis, the number of patients seen with ILI. These Sentinel providers are also offered five (5) fee-waived tests to use at their discretion.

Suspected clusters/outbreaks or special circumstances surrounding ILI should be reported to MT DPHHS-CDEpi (406-444-0273) and special arrangements may be made for testing. All requested surveillance testing other than from the designated laboratories and Sentinel providers must have a CDEpi consult before acceptance for testing.

When submitting specimens for testing to the MTPHL, please do not submit specimens for testing that are the residual from rapid testing. Specimens must have been collected into universal transport media and shipped in a cold condition. Also, please use the designated influenza surveillance forms. If you have not received these forms please contact MTPHL at 1-800-821-7284

For more information surrounding designated surveillance sites, specimen collection, diagnostic testing, and surveillance testing for Influenza, please visit the MTPHL website at:

http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/lab/news.shtml

For more information about influenza activity in the United States during the influenza season, visit the Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report (FluView): www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivitysurv.htm

Coming soon: QuantiFERON®-TB Gold Plus four-tube assay

MTPHL is in the final stages of validating the new 4th generation QuantiFERON®-TB Gold Plus four-tube assay. The manufacturer has phased out the current 3rd generation QuantiFERON-TB Gold phlebotomy tubes (3 tube assay) and is now shipping the new 4th generation QuantiFERON®-TB Gold Plus phlebotomy tubes (4 tube assay). MTPHL will be providing additional information in the coming weeks to prepare facilities for the change.

What is QuantiFERON®-TB Gold Plus?

The use of TB blood tests, like QuantiFERON-TB Gold Plus is consistent with 2017 TB guidelines from CDC, ATS and IDSA. These now preferentially recommend a TB blood test over the tuberculin skin test (TST) for most of the US testing population (1).

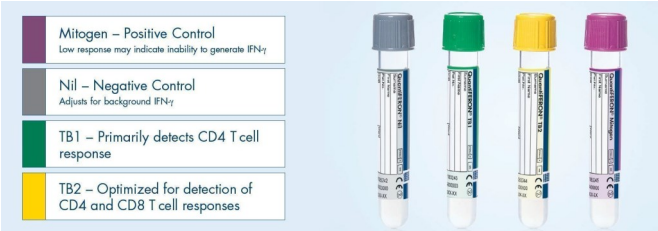
QFT-Plus is an indirect test for M. tuberculosis infection (including disease) and is intended for use in conjunction with risk assessment, radiography, and other medical and diagnostic evaluations. QFT-Plus was FDA-approved in June 2017 and was developed to increase the sensitivity of detecting latent TB infection and active TB disease. The assay includes TB antigens to stimulate both CD4+ and CD8+ T Cells (QFT-Gold is optimized to stimulate CD4+ T Cells only). The detection of CD8+ T cell responses requires an additional tube and the QFT-Plus uses 4 tubes rather than 3. Tubes are NOT interchangeable; do NOT mix 3rd and 4th generation tubes.

What can your facility expect?

- Other than the addition of a 4th tube, phlebotomy and sample processing procedures remain unchanged for the new QFT-Plus test.
- MTPHL will continue to distribute 4 tube collection kits as needed.
- QFT-Plus reports and final interpretations have been updated to reflect manufacturer changes.
- In-depth phlebotomy instructions and test interpretation procedures will be sent out with the new collection kits.

If your facility would like to know more about the QuantiFERON®-TB Gold Plus four-tube assay offered by MTPHL please contact Angela Dusko at 406-444-3040.

1. Lewinsohn, D.M. et al. (2017) Official American Thoracic Society/Infectious Diseases Society of America/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Clinical Practice Guidelines: Diagnosis of Tuberculosis in Adults and Children. Clin. Infect. Dis. 64, 111-115.



NEW! Herpes Simplex Virus 1 and 2 molecular testing and collection

The Montana Public Health Laboratory has implemented a new test method on the Hologic Panther instrument for molecular detection of Herpes Simplex Virus (HSV) 1 and 2. Lesion swabs may be collected by clinicians on patients suspected of being infected with HSV using the new Aptima Multitest Swab Specimen Collection Kit. If you do not have the Aptima Multitest Swab Specimen Collection Kits on hand, lesion swabs may also be collected in viral transport media and sent in cold condition for HSV testing. An added benefit of the new Multiswab collection kit, is you can also test the lesion swab specimens for *Chlamydia trachomatis* and/or *Neisseria gonorrhea*, in addition to HSV 1 and HIV 2.

Multitest Swab Specimen Collection Kits are available from the Montana Public Health Laboratory and can be sent to your facility upon request. This new Multiswab collection kit can also be used for clinician and patient collection of vaginal, penile, rectal, and throat specimens for CT/GC testing.