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State Lab Approved for New H1N1 Influenza Testing

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention approved the Arizona State Public Health Laboratory to test for the new H1N1 strain of influenza. Arizona was one of six states to receive approval today. While the state lab began testing for the new virus yesterday, ADHS had to wait for CDC validation of test results. There are now 130 confirmed cases in Arizona.

"We expected our total number of positive cases to increase because we are working through the CDC backlog of tests. This is not a reason for concern," said Will Humble, Interim Director of Arizona Department of Health Services. "People need to continue practicing good public health hygiene – stay home when you are sick and wash your hands regularly."

From now on, the state will do all testing for the new H1N1 strain in Phoenix. However, ADHS is asking laboratories to only send in samples from the hospitalized cases. The state laboratory will be able to provide quicker answers to the medical community about patient illnesses.

The symptoms of the new H1N1 strain are similar to those of regular influenza: high fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches – some cases have nausea and diarrhea. Treatment is the same as influenza: stay in bed, rest and drink plenty of fluids. If you are concerned about your symptoms, contact your doctor.

Every person can protect themselves from the new virus and other illnesses by practicing good hygiene. Wash your hands thoroughly and try to limit contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, stay home.

ADHS will continue to monitor the situation and provide updates as needed on our website at www.azdhs.gov/phs/oids/epi/flu and at 800-314-9243. Or you can visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/swine/index.htm>.

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