

## Memo

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**To:** Reference Laboratory Clients

**From:** Allina Medical Laboratories, Reference Laboratory Services

**Date:** October 20, 2011

**Re:** Influenza Testing Guidelines

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### INFLUENZA TESTING GUIDELINES

#### When to Order the Influenza Antigen (6696/INF) Test

- Non-seriously ill outpatient
- Influenza prevalence is high
- H1N1 strain is NOT the prevalent strain circulating in the community

#### Reliability and Interpretation of the Influenza Antigen Test

- As compared to RT-PCR or viral culture, influenza antigen tests have a sensitivity of 50-70% and specificity of 90-95%
- When influenza prevalence in the community is low, false positive (and true negative) results are more likely to occur
- When influenza prevalence is high, false negative (and true positive) results are more likely to occur

#### When to Order the Influenza A/B/H1N1 PCR (8810/INP) Test— Available Beginning 11/8/2011

- Inpatients
- ED patients being admitted
- Seriously ill patients
- H1N1 is the predominant strain circulating in the community

#### Consider PCR Test After Screening With the Influenza Antigen Test if

- The **influenza antigen test is positive** when the influenza **prevalence is low** (rule out false positive antigen test)
- The **influenza antigen test is negative** when the influenza **prevalence is high** (rule out false negative antigen test)