

Influenza 2003

by Tony Sambol, Assistant Director, NPHL

As the United States is now seeing an marked increase of influenza cases, the Nebraska Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) would like to remind laboratorians that all questions regarding influenza surveillance and testing should be directed to, the State Epidemiologist, Dr. Thomas Safranek (402-471-0550).

Upon Dr. Safranek's request, the NPHL will perform antigenic testing on a subset of isolates sent to the NPHL. This testing is performed by state public health laboratories, including the NPHL, to assist the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in characterizing the different influenza strains that are being seen in the United States.

Each year the NPHL submits approximately 30 isolates to the CDC for specific strain serotyping. So far this year we have submitted 10 Influenza A H3N2 isolates to the CDC. We will soon know whether the Influenza isolates submitted are of the Panama or Fujian strain.

Additional information about influenza is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website. (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/flu/fluivirus.htm)