



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

**Date:** September 29, 2025

**To:** Medical Laboratory Directors, Local Health Officers and Healthcare Providers

**From:** David Blythe, MD MPH - *DB*  
Director, Infectious Disease Bureau

Robert A. Myers, Ph.D. *R.M.*  
Director, Laboratories Administration

**Re:** Start of Enhanced Influenza and Viral Respiratory Pathogen Surveillance Program

The 2025-2026 enhanced seasonal influenza surveillance season will commence on Monday, October 6, 2025. In addition to influenza, we are again expanding our surveillance activities in Maryland to target other viral respiratory pathogens your laboratories may be routinely testing for, such as SARS-CoV-2, RSV, parainfluenza viruses, adenoviruses, rhino/enteroviruses and human metapneumoviruses. Therefore, in accordance with Maryland law, including the Annotated Code of Maryland Health General Article 18-205 and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 10.06.01.03, **we are requesting that laboratories submit remnant positive specimens from ALL cases of respiratory illnesses that have tested positive for influenza A, SARS-CoV-2 or other viral respiratory pathogens (e.g. RSV, parainfluenza, adenovirus, rhino/enterovirus, human metapneumovirus) to the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) Laboratory** for typing and possible further characterization. Submission of these specimens during the early weeks of the seasonal influenza transmission period will better assist us in quickly identifying and further characterizing the viral respiratory pathogens that are circulating in the state. Additionally, CDC has requested that we sustain sequencing surveillance for SARS-CoV-2. Therefore, we encourage your laboratories to continue to submit SARS-CoV-2 positive specimens to MDH Lab to help support this important national surveillance activity. **When viral respiratory disease activity increases, we will provide additional guidance on scaling back submissions of surveillance specimens.**

As always, we request the immediate submission of specimens from any suspected potential novel influenza A virus infections. Arrangements for priority testing to possibly detect avian influenza viruses, such as influenza A (H5N1) and (H7N9), can be made if patients meet recommended clinical and epidemiological criteria (contact your local health department to confirm criteria are met and to coordinate the submission of these specimens to the State Laboratory). Submission of specimens from patients with recent swine exposures will also be accepted for timely influenza A(H3N2v) diagnostic testing.

Please visit our website (<https://health.maryland.gov/laboratories/Pages/Influenza.aspx>) and select Specimen Submission Guidelines for Suspect Influenza Virus Infection (September 29, 2025) for the logistical details of submitting influenza specimens to the MDH Laboratory. You can also contact us at (443) 681-3924 or (443) 681-3905 for questions regarding changes to the surveillance testing program.

Your participation in the enhanced influenza/viral respiratory pathogen surveillance program is greatly appreciated. The specimens submitted to the MDH Laboratory for testing provide valuable insights into the nature and transmission of viral respiratory pathogens in Maryland and contribute vitally important information to both national and international influenza surveillance networks.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and understanding in this matter.

cc: Dr. Meg Sullivan  
Dr. David Blythe  
Dr. Monique Duwell  
Dr. David Crum  
Mr. Brian Bachaus  
Ms. Curi Kim  
Ms. Maya Monroe