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Division of Disease Control

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Health Advisory

Enterovirus D68 Activity In Philadelphia and CDC Confirmatory Testing September 19, 2014

On Tuesday, September 16th Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) was notified by CDC that 2 of the 3 positive enterovirus-D68 (EV-D68) results from Pennsylvania occurred in Philadelphia residents, confirming that the virus is circulating locally. Also over the last few days, PDPH has identified increases of asthma and respiratory-related visits to local pediatric emergency departments (EDs). Respiratory and asthma-related ED visits often increase in the fall - a reflection of the spread of respiratory viruses once children are back in school. EV-D68 may be contributing to the increase in activity, but it is unlikely to be the sole cause. Although the number of respiratory-related ED visits is higher than usual for this time of year, the rate of admissions at these institutions has remained stable relative to previous late summer/early fall admission rates.

Guidance on EV-D68 Testing at CDC

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend laboratory testing of respiratory specimens for enteroviruses when the cause of respiratory illness in severely ill patients is unclear. Currently, specimens must be referred to CDC to determine if EV-D68 is specifically present. Once EV-D68 has been confirmed in a community, routine testing is no longer indicated.

Due to the volume of specimens being submitted, CDC is prioritizing EV-D68 testing in order to enhance the epidemiological characterization of the outbreak across the country. Specimens that have tested positive for enterovirus/rhinovirus may be referred for further analysis if there is a compelling epidemiologic reason to do so, including:

- Patient is from a locality that has not established the presence of the virus;
- Patient represents a unique population in which infection has not yet been defined;
- Patient resides in a vulnerable congregant setting where results may influence control measures; and
- Patient has an unusual clinical presentation or death.

For more information about specimen submission requirements for molecular sequencing at CDC, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/lab-testing/specimen-collection.html>

Enteroviral infections, including EV-D68, are generally not reportable; however, suspected clusters or outbreaks should be reported to the PDPH Division of Disease Control at 215-685-6740.