



QUALITY UPDATE

A monthly publication providing information and updates to CompuNet Clients.

Mission: Improve the Health of Our Community through Excellence in Medical Laboratory Services

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Swine Flu Update

By Nicole Kahmann – Virology/Molecular Diagnostics Manager

CompuNet Clinical Laboratory is closely monitoring the recent swine influenza concerns.

This is an Influenza A strain, subtype H1N1 and is a combination of swine influenza, avian influenza, and human influenza. It is a new strain not previously seen in humans. It is spread through droplets (cough and sneeze) and contact (virus on surfaces).

When testing for influenza, the specimens of choice include nasopharyngeal swabs, nasal aspirates, nasal swabs, or oropharyngeal swabs transported in VTM (viral transport medium). Do not test patients unless they have influenza-like illnesses.

For any suspected influenza order both Influenza A DFA and Influenza B DFA

- Influenza A DFA order code: 73472
- Influenza B DFA order code: 73706

CompuNet DFA test results will be reported within 24 hours. Any positive Influenza A specimens will be forwarded to the Ohio Department of Health to be sub-typed for swine flu.

There is currently no vaccine available to protect against swine flu. The CDC recommends the use of oseltamivir or zanamivir for the treatment of swine influenza viruses. Prevention is important. The following actions can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses including influenza:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- When contact with ill people is unavoidable, wear masks and gloves.
- If you get sick with influenza, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

For questions concerning influenza specimen collection and /or testing please call the Virology/Molecular department at 937-297-8338.

Quality Patient Results Series – Maintaining Specimen Integrity from Collection to Testing

By Lisa Barnhart – *Quality Assurance Assistant*

In previous Quality Update articles we have discussed various specimen collection and handling processes that are important to ensure a quality result. The CompuNet Directory of Services includes information on specimen handling instructions. These instructions include: how to prepare the sample and preferred temperature requirements for optimum specimen stability (ambient or room temp, refrigerate, frozen).

In order to ensure that our clients are receiving quality patient results, CompuNet reviews every specimen received and initiates a follow-up process when any of the following criteria is met:

- *An unspun or poorly spun Serum Separator Tube or Red top tube with a collection date other than the date received in the laboratory*
- *A lavender or light blue top tube with a specimen collection time > 24hrs*
- *A previously frozen sample that has thawed or partially thawed*
- *A urine specimen received in a sample cup with a collection date other than the date received in the laboratory (this does not apply to urine Drug Screen Samples)*
- *Urinalysis transport tube with a collection date > 3 days prior to date received in the lab*
- *Urine Culture transport tube with a collection date > 2 days prior to date received in the lab*
- *Unpreserved Stool samples with a specimen age > 24hrs*
- *Hemocult (stool) cards with a collection date > 14 days.*
- *Any other specimen, not listed, that has a collection date other than the date received in the laboratory or the day before.*

Laboratory results that best reflect the clinical picture of the patient are a direct result of the partnership between CompuNet and our clients to collect and maintain quality specimens. When specimens are received that meet the criteria described above our processing or client services departments will contact your office to verify specimen information. This will assist the CompuNet Technical staff in properly evaluating the integrity of specimen(s).

Quality Patient Results Series - cont.

Tracking our specimen investigations, we have found that:

1. Approximately 30% indicate an incorrect collection date was documented on the order. You can avoid a phone call by verifying that the correct collection date appears on the order.

2. Approximately 10% indicate that the specimen collection is from a previous day and the specimens were not maintained as directed in the Directory of Services. This information is used to determine if a specimen is viable for testing or needs to be recollected.

To avoid unnecessary phone calls from the lab, please contact the **CompuNet Transportation Department at 937-297-8262** when you discover specimens from a previous collection date. The dispatcher will ask a series of questions to obtain necessary information for the testing department to determine the specimen viability. You will be notified, once the technical department evaluates the sample(s), if the requested testing cannot be performed.

A Look Inside the Microbiology Department

By: *Ike Northern – Microbiology/Serology Manager*

Our Microbiology Department is one of CompuNet's many busy departments. Here are some interesting facts about the department.

Employees:

- The department is run by 27 employees:
 - 23 Employees on Day Shift
 - 3 Employees on Evening Shift
 - 1 Employee on Night Shift
- The average age of the employees is 36. CompuNet as an organization has an average age of 49.

Workloads:

- In 2008, there were 231,552 tests run
 - 81,040 of those were urine cultures

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A Look Inside the Microbiology Department *cont.*

Hopefully, this gives some insight into the running of our Microbiology Department. Below are pictures of some of the smiling Microbiology staff!

Instrumentation:

- When CompuNet first became a company – 20 some years ago - talking about automation in the Microbiology would have been unheard of. Today, though, there are several instruments used to help in providing results faster to our clients.

Computer System:

- The department went live with Sunquest Information System® on March 9, 2009 for a partial set of our clients. They will be moving all their work to the Sunquest® system hopefully late 2009. Why is this important? Sunquest Information System® provides easier to read reporting for our clients and also improved processes in the department which again allows faster reporting to you – our clients.

CompuNet Microbiology Trivia:

- How many malaria smears were conducted in 2008?
 - 204 malaria smears! With the Dayton and area communities are welcoming individuals from various countries, it's not such a rarity as it once was.
- How many different antibiotics can we test for susceptibility to microorganisms?
 - 47 antibiotics!
- Which of the following is an acronym for types of bacterial resistance that we must be able to detect: ESBL, MRSA, KPC, VISA, VRE
 - All of them! And here are what they stand for:
 - ESBL (Extended spectrum beta-lactamase)
 - MRSA (Methicillin resistant Staph aureus)
 - KPC (Klebsiella pneumoniae carbapenemase)
 - VISA (Vancomycin intermediate Staph aureus)
 - VRE (Vancomycin resistant Enterococci)
- What is the most time-consuming culture that Microbiology performs: CF Culture (Cystic Fibrosis), Stool Culture, Urine Culture, Fungal Culture?
 - CF Culture (Cystic Fibrosis)!
- How long does it take a new microbiologist to become efficient and proficient in performing all microbiology procedures?
 - 1 to 2 years to become truly proficient in all areas of Microbiology!

Our Couriers – Friendly, Dedicated *and* Safe Drivers

Our Transportation Department celebrated their 7th year of our Safe Driving Award Program. To qualify for the reward the courier must drive the entire year without an accident or citation. This is especially commendable since CompuNet couriers drive on average of 65,000 miles each month. We appreciate the efforts they make to drive safely in all types of weather.

We celebrate each year with a special breakfast for the entire department. A cash award along with a special pin is given for each year of safe driving. An additional cash amount is awarded for 5, 10, 15 ... years. A total of 43 couriers received awards at the celebration. The couriers in the picture have received an award for all 7 years of the program. Congratulations to each of these couriers for a safe job well done! See if you recognize your courier. Those not pictured are Stan Olszewski, LaTonya Redd & Jesse Ramsey.



Back row (1 to r): Don August, James Wells, Ed Commons, Don Nagle, Jerry Schafer, & Waymon Williams
Front Row (1 to r): Paul Labbe (VP Operations), Joe Bishop, Ronnie Hall, & Ron Mosbarger (Transportation Manager)

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