



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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STATE PUBLIC HEALTH LAB APPROVED TO CONFIRM H1N1 FLU CASES

Probable Cases Now Confirmed, New Cases Identified

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – The Tennessee Department of Health state laboratory is now confirming cases of the H1N1 influenza virus and will no longer submit all samples to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for confirmation. Now that confirmations can be made by the state lab, Tennessee will begin reporting only confirmed cases of this new strain of flu virus.

“This demonstrates the quality of work and expertise among our state lab professionals,” said state Health Commissioner Susan R. Cooper, MSN, RN. “Residents and their health care providers will receive reports of confirmed cases of the H1N1 virus as soon as testing is complete.”

Tennessee cases previously listed as probable are now reported as confirmed. Cooper reiterated statements made Wednesday that the increase in confirmed cases comes with this change in procedure, and does not necessarily reflect a surge in cases of the virus.

The Tennessee Department of Health continues to conduct active surveillance to determine how widespread the virus is in the state, and has confirmed additional cases since the most recent update. As of today, 36 cases have been confirmed statewide. The county breakdown of cases is as follows:

County	Cases Confirmed
Davidson	18
Knox	8
Maury	1
Shelby	1
Williamson	8
TOTAL	36

– more –

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All Tennessee patients are recovering from the illness and have a good prognosis. The Tennessee Department of Health is working with local public health officials to identify the patients' family and close contacts. Anyone identified as a close contact of a patient will be notified by the Department.

Tennessee's public health lab system includes the central location in Nashville, regional labs in Knoxville and Jackson, and a partnership agreement with the Memphis-Shelby County Health Department Laboratory. The central lab has been able to maintain and stay current with all Tennessee demands for H1N1 specimen testing, in addition to other routine activities. To date, 568 specimens submitted from Tennessee residents have been tested.

"Specimens will be processed as quickly as possible to assist health care professionals in providing the best possible care to their patients and help state epidemiologists monitor the progression the H1N1 flu outbreak," said David L. Smalley, Ph.D., MSS, BCLD, Tennessee public health laboratory director.

It was also announced today that the state lab is assisting Texas public health authorities with testing of samples from their patients who may be infected with the new H1N1 flu virus. Tennessee's public health labs have already begun testing an initial submission of 400 samples from Texas. The regional labs in Knoxville and Memphis are providing support to Texas. Both Tennessee and Texas samples are tested using the same procedures, so Texas results from Tennessee's labs are also final.

In order to be certified, state labs must submit five samples to the CDC, which are then verified. CDC also allows for state to state arrangements for one "certified" lab to do confirmatory testing for another. Additionally, one state certified lab can do the verification tests for another and inform CDC accordingly.

For more information about the current flu outbreak, visit the Department of Health Web site at <http://health.state.tn.us/H1N1.htm>. Additional information is also available at the CDC's Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>.

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This news release can be accessed online at <https://news.tennesseeanytime.org/taxonomy/term/30>.