



# Messenger

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## **Influenza Season Update**

While seasonal influenza laboratory surveillance has ceased, the County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Laboratory (SLOPHL) continues to detect the principal subtypes that are circulating this season: influenza type A subtype H3 and type A 2009 H1N1 with fewer numbers of influenza type B virus, subtypes Yamagata and Victoria. Transmission throughout California is still categorized as "widespread," as it is throughout the nation. Some surveillance parameters indicate that transmission is cresting but it may require a few more weeks to determine if that is certain, as this has proven to be a very severe influenza season by any standard.

Other common respiratory viruses also continue to circulate, and rapid test methods can still be expected to reliably distinguish between patients infected with influenza viruses and those afflicted with viruses associated with the common cold and others such as RSV, parainfluenza virus 1, 2, 3 and 4, human metapneumovirus, adenovirus and enteroviruses that cause more serious respiratory infections, often requiring hospitalization. The SLO PHL has seen detections of all these viruses this season, although rhinovirus/enterovirus remains the most commonly detected pathogen.

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## **Special Thanks to Pacific Wildlife Care**

In 2017, the SLOPHL detected rabies virus in three bats, the highest number of detections in recent years. The Laboratory Director and staff extend our gratitude to the volunteers and staff of [Pacific Wildlife Care \(PWC\)](#), a partner in protecting the public's health.

Pacific Wildlife Care played a role with the County of San Luis Obispo Animal Services in each of these detections and was instrumental in the safe location, collection, transport and delivery of the bat carcasses to our facility. PWC staff also provided the exact location of the recovery of the bats, an important parameter for public health surveillance.

Since 2014, PWC has provided dozens of wild animal specimens for rabies testing, broadening our understanding of a virus that merits close attention.

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## **Multi-State Salmonella Outbreak Linked to Imported Shredded Coconut**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in connection with the

FDA, state and local public health departments and the Public Health Agency of Canada, reported Salmonella infections linked to Coconut Tree Brand frozen shredded coconut imported from Vietnam.

As of mid-January, 24 cases of infection with the outbreak strains of Salmonella serotype I, 4, [5], 12:b: and one case of Salmonella Newport infection have been reported from nine states: California (9), Pennsylvania (5), Washington (4), Massachusetts (2), Colorado (1), Connecticut (1), New Jersey (1), New York (1), and Oklahoma (1). Although six patients have been hospitalized, no deaths have been reported.

The investigation has revealed consumption or possible consumption of items containing coconut, with a significant number of patients reporting that they consumed a dessert drink that contained frozen shredded coconut. Many patients were patrons of the same restaurant chain in several states.

Testing of samples of the dessert drink ingredients by several state public health laboratories have resulted in recovery of the outbreak strain of Salmonella as well as other Salmonella serotypes.

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## **Save the Date! Packaging and Shipping Training Saturday, April 14, 2018**

**at Hardy Diagnostics in Santa Maria  
Free of Charge for Attendees**

Nationally-recognized CDC expert Pat Payne will present a packaging and shipping workshop on Saturday, April 14 in Santa Maria. This one-day program provides a comprehensive overview of regulations applicable to packaging and shipping human and animal specimens for lab testing.

FAA regulations require that individuals who perform packaging and shipping receive training every three years. The FAA is known to perform unannounced site inspections of laboratories and requesting shipping and training records for all staff assigned these duties.

For information, contact Kyllie Bouget at 805-781-5507 or [kbouget@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:kbouget@co.slo.ca.us). You can register for the course at [www.aphl.org/007-18](http://www.aphl.org/007-18).

The workshop is free of charge to attendees, and lunch will be provided.

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