



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY *Messenger* Public Health Laboratory

November 2016

Public Health departments in California have cause to continue to urge citizens to fight the bite of mosquitoes both here and abroad. Three viruses - arthropod-borne and belonging to the Flavivirus (Yellow Fever virus) group - continue to call attention to prevention measures.

Zika Virus Activity

As of November 10, 374 cases of Zika virus infection have been reported in California, with 3,988 cases reported in the US as of November 2. Local transmission is still restricted to Florida with 217 such cases reported. Travelers with Zika infection have identified exposure during visits to Mexico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic predominantly, with an additional 26 countries reported as exposure sites. A single case has been detected in a traveler who resides in San Luis Obispo County. Testing by the California State Viral and Rickettsial Diseases Lab and nine local public health laboratories continues at an unabated pace, with 200+ specimens submitted each week.

West Nile Virus Activity

As of November 9, a total of 388 cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) illness have been reported in 31 California local health jurisdictions, but not from San Luis Obispo County. Fully 74% of cases have involved neuro-invasive illness, and there have been 16 fatalities. A total of 15 local health departments have reported a total of 38 WNV-positive blood donors.

St Louis Encephalitis Activity

Two cases of Saint Louis Encephalitis virus (SLEV) have been reported by Fresno (1) and Sacramento (1) counties. Surveillance testing of mosquitoes or sentinel chickens has shown the presence of the virus in 9 counties, including Fresno, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Tulare.

Influenza Laboratory Surveillance

The California Department of Public Health reports overall influenza activity as “sporadic” during the week ending October 29. During the first five weeks of the new “Flu” season that began October 2, the San Luis Obispo County Public Health Laboratory (SLO PHL) has detected three positive results, Type A H3, by reverse transcription PCR. For viral surveillance, selected specimens from hospitalized patients who have tested negative for influenza virus are being tested with the Respiratory Pathogen PCR panel. The SLO PHL is soliciting the submission of specimens (naso-pharyngeal swab in M4 Viral transport medium; Influenza RT-PCR, Test # 50000) for seasonal influenza virus surveillance without charge. Note: These specimens can also be “reflexed” to a Respiratory PCR Panel (Test # 6310) in the event of a negative influenza test result.

Hospitals are being asked to submit specimens from patients who are hospitalized with influenza-like illness (ILI) and/or placed in an ICU — regardless of rapid test result.

Outpatient Health Care Providers are requested to submit specimens from patients with ILI and a positive rapid influenza test.

Questions on laboratory testing? Call (805) 781-5507