
Surveillance for Swine-Origin Influenza Virus (SOIV) in Washington State

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Abstract: The first reports of a novel influenza virus, a swine-origin influenza virus (SOIV), among cases in California triggered national case finding and enhanced surveillance efforts. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) established an enhanced surveillance system to find cases, monitor the spread of the outbreak, and assess the severity of cases within the state. DOH and local health jurisdictions (LHJs) focused on outreach to receive samples from healthcare providers, medical examiners, commercial laboratories, and hospitals to identify persons suitable for testing. Confirmatory testing was completed at the DOH Public Health Laboratories. The LHJs completed case investigations and submitted reports to DOH for compilation with laboratory results and analysis. The first cases in Washington had illness onsets in late April 2009, within two days of the first published national report of SOIV. Although the initial focus of the national surveillance was travel to Mexico, none of the first three cases in Washington had such travel. In subsequent cases, travel to Mexico was an infrequently identified risk factor. Preliminary analysis revealed that the majority of cases were 5-17 years old and resided in the counties around Puget Sound. Nearly all of the cases reported fever and cough or sore throat, which is consistent with typical influenza. More than 25% of the cases identified in the first three weeks reported diarrhea and vomiting. Although these symptoms are frequently seen in pediatric age groups with seasonal influenza, it appears to be a more common finding in these SOIV cases in Washington.