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To: All SB County PCPs and IPAs

From: IEHP – Provider Relations

Date: January 31, 2025

Subject: H5N1 Avian Influenza: Request for Specimen Submission from ICU Patients and Fatal Cases in San Bernardino County

On December 18, 2024, a State of Emergency was declared in response to the spread of bird flu, with 67 confirmed human cases reported across ten states, 38 in California, and one fatality outside California. The San Bernardino County Department of Public Health (SBCDPH) confirmed California's first H5N1 case in a domestic cat linked to recalled raw milk. As of today, no human-to-human transmission has been documented.

Action items for clinicians and clinical laboratories include:

- Follow hospital protocols for testing influenza-like illness.
- Subtype all influenza A positive specimens from hospitalized patients, especially ICU cases, for seasonal strains A(H1) and A(H3).
- **Submit specimens positive for influenza A but negative for seasonal subtypes to the public health lab.**
- Immediately notify the health department if avian influenza A(H5N1) is suspected, based on symptoms and exposure.
- If subtyping isn't available locally, contact SBC PHL for coordination.
- For more details, visit the CDC Health Alert Network.

Patients meeting specific clinical and epidemiological criteria must be reported to the SBCDPH by calling (800) 722-4794 during business hours (Monday-Friday 8am-5pm) or (800) 472-2376 after hours.

Preventive Measures:

- Avoid raw milk and undercooked meat; choose pasteurized products.
- Wear protective clothing when handling birds or livestock and wash hands frequently.
- A recall of specific raw milk lots from Raw Farm, LLC has been issued; consumers should return affected products.

For information on laboratory testing, supplies, and reporting, visit www.dph.sbcounty.gov > Menu > Programs & Services > Public Health Laboratory > Laboratory Testing, Supplies & Reporting or click [here](#)

For questions or more information, visit www.dph.sbcounty.gov/birdflu or contact SBCDPH at 800-722-4794 or after-hours at (800) 472-2376 or email CDS@dph.sbcounty.gov

If you have any questions, please contact the IEHP Provider Call Center at (909) 890-2054, (866) 223-4347 or email ProviderServices@iehp.org

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