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MEMORANDUM

TO: Affiliated Laboratory (Dr. Kirk Doing), NORDX (Mr Donald Piper)
FROM: Brian Bernier, Supervisor, Molecular Methods, HETL
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SUBJECT: COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT PANDEMIC FLU PCR TESTING MAINE
CC: Ms. Christine Perkins , Director, Division of Public Health Systems
Dr. Kenneth Pote, Laboratory Director, Maine HETL
DATE: September 25, 2009

INTRODUCTION: This cooperative agreement/memorandum of understanding outlines the basic tenants of cooperation between Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (MeCDC) , the Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL), NORDX and Affiliated Laboratories Incorporated (ALI) in preparation for the 2009-2010 Influenza Pandemic.

BACKGROUND: Beginning in late April of 2009, a novel influenza A virus spread across North America after originating in Mexico. Diagnostic testing utilizing RT-PCR specific for this agent was implemented under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the US CDC and implemented in public health laboratories throughout the US. HETL tested an unprecedented number of specimens for influenza under the EUA. On June 11, 2009 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared an influenza pandemic associated with a novel strain of influenza A H1N1, initially designated as "swine influenza A[H1N1]." Since that time other reference laboratories have developed and implemented rt-PCR based testing for flu and this agent. Recent guidance issued by The Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) directs all state public health laboratories to establish cooperative agreements with reference laboratories within their respective states that have the capacity to perform rt-PCR testing for influenza. This document is in response to this guidance and a result of ongoing communications regarding cooperation for flu testing between HETL, ALI and NORDX .

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT: ALI and NORDX agree to provide surge capacity influenza testing by RT-PCR in the event that HETL is unable to handle the demand placed on it due to daily sample volume. In this scenario HETL would utilize either the ALI/ NORDX or HETL contracted courier to send flu specimens to the respective laboratories provided that the other laboratories had sufficient capacity to handle an increased sample load. COST to HETL/MeCDC: ALI and NORDX will provide such testing at no more than the normal or, preferably reduced rate. MeCDC agrees to provide surge flu testing for both ALI and NORDX at no cost provided that specimens submitted for testing are accompanied by the Influenza Virus Specimen Submission Form available at: http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/etl/micro/influenza_submission_form.doc In the event that HETL is unable to process specimens for test requests other than influenza due to a surge in influenza testing demand, ALI and NORDX agree to provide surge capacity testing for HETL for specimens submitted for tests other than influenza if said tests are available and the respective laboratories have the capacity to handle an increase in testing demand at the time of request. ALI and NORDX agree to bill HETL for such testing at no more than the normal or, preferably reduced rate.