

Email sent via Laboratory Quality Assurance distribution list

Date: September 8, 2014

Subject: Coccidioidomycosis (“Valley Fever”) reporting changes

Attachment: Coccidioidomycosis Reporting in Washington 9-08-14

Dear colleagues,

The Washington State Department of Health (WA DOH) would like to provide an update regarding coccidioidomycosis (“Valley Fever”) in our state. **We are changing our surveillance strategy from what was initially requested in April 2014.** At that time, we asked for laboratory submission of isolates to Washington State Public Health Laboratories (WA PHL) only in cases where in-state exposure occurred. However, delayed reporting and/or requests for isolate submission may mean that some desired isolates will have already been destroyed per routine laboratory protocols. Furthermore, exposure locations are not always clear-cut from patient interviews. In order to avoid the potential loss of isolates that may indeed be locally acquired strains, **we are now requesting that clinical laboratories submit all Coccidioides isolates to WA PHL.**

Isolates are being requested for submission to allow for additional characterization that will provide molecular epidemiological evidence to aid in the identification of locally-acquired cases. Non-culture specimens need only be submitted upon request. Clinical laboratories are still asked to report all positive findings of Coccidioides to their local health jurisdictions under the rare disease of public health significance category for notifiable conditions.

Please review the attached health alert with background information and specific requested actions for laboratories. Questions can be directed to your local health jurisdiction or the Office of Communicable Disease Epidemiology at WA DOH (206-418-5500).

Sincerely,

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