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FROM: Marilyn A. Menegus, Ph.D.
Associate Director, Clinical Microbiology Laboratories & Professor of
Microbiology and Immunology, Department of Pathology and Laboratory
Medicine
Phone: (585) 275-7735
E-mail: Marilyn.Menegus@URMC.Rochester.edu

Julietta Fiscella, MD, FCAP
Director Dept. of Pathology, Cytopathology & Laboratory Medicine
Highland Hospital
Phone: (585) 341-8075
E-Mail: julietta_fiscella@urmc.rochester.edu

RE: Changes in Respiratory Virus Testing

DATE: June 14, 2010

Effective 5/15/10, the Clinical Virology Laboratory will discontinue routine **specific** testing for Influenza and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). The rapid EIA (enzyme immunoassay) and PCR assays for both viruses are included in our winter respiratory screens. Influenza culture of nasopharyngeal specimens or comprehensive virus culture will continue to be available for diagnosis of respiratory viral infections.

Although 2009 was a year of unusual activity for Influenza, the RSV season of 2010 was quite normal. RSV season began in October, peaked in January and decreased through April. The fall Flu season began in September and subsided in December 2009 with only 10 cases identified by PCR since January 2010. There have been no Influenza positive specimens since the end of April.

We will remain vigilant to the reappearance of Influenza and RSV by monitoring national, regional and local surveillance data. Specific routine testing for Influenza and RSV will be reinstated when these viruses are present regionally. We will publish our Winter Virus Update when testing resumes.

For further information contact Woody Cichanowicz, Highland Hospital Microbiology at 341-6695 or Laura Paul, SMH Microbiology at 275-1340.