results, consider the sensitivity of the test, the patient's stage of illness, and local virus surveillance information (www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly).

When influenza viruses are circulating in a community, the positive predictive value of the RDIT and DFA tests are high, but they may not specifically identify the H1N1 subtype. And not all rRT-PCR assays can identify the pandemic H1N1 virus, according to the CDC statement.

If specific diagnosis of the pandemic H1N1 influenza virus is required, the CDC recommends testing with either an rRT-PCR assay specific for pandemic H1N1 influenza or testing with a viral culture.

The recommendations also include guidance for clinicians about proper collection and storage of respiratory specimens. ■

Find the complete pandemic influenza A(H1N1) recommendations online at the CDC Web site, cdc.gov.

CDC Tests Mobile Message System

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is pilot testing a system to deliver information about pandemic influenza A(H1N1) and other health information directly to mobile phones, according to a statement on the CDC's Web site.

The 3-month pilot test began in September, and the CDC is soliciting feedback from users. To subscribe to the service, potential users should text HEALTH to the number 87000.

The CDC does not charge subscribers a fee to participate in the pilot testing, but standard text messaging rates may apply based on an individual's different wireless service contract.

Upon initial signup, users will receive several introductory messages and questions, according to the Web site.

The program then sends three health tips per week. To unsubscribe from the service, users should send a reply with HEALTH QUIT in the body of the message.

—Heidi Splete