

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## 10-MINUTE FLU TEST MAY OFFER FASTER DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

### New Test Can Cut Anxiety, Wait, Costs and Spread of Virus

NORWOOD, MASS. (Issued September 2009) -- A presidential advisory panel says swine flu could kill 30,000 – 90,000 Americans this fall and winter. Some experts predict that within two years, one-third of the world's population will have caught the new 2009 H1N1 strain.

Reliable Respiratory of Norwood, Mass., is among the first respiratory supply companies in New England to distribute the FDA-approved rapid diagnostic QuickVue® Influenza Test Kits, only available in doctors' offices.

Timing is key in treating the flu. With a simple nasal swab sample, a medical professional can determine within 10 minutes if the patient has any form of influenza. Prompt diagnosis provides the doctor with a choice of antiviral therapy, helps avoid the overuse of antibiotics (and resulting possible immunity), and avoids the costs of unnecessary testing and treatment. Knowing as soon as possible that a child is 'influenza positive' can help parents begin proper treatment – and quarantine him or her in time to avoid spreading the flu to classmates and teachers. Unlike other flu strains that target seniors, infections from the new strain are about 15 times more common in the 5 to 24 year-old age group.

If diagnosed early enough -- 24 to 48 hours after first symptoms appear -- a treatment of antiviral drugs can alleviate the severity of symptoms, cut down on the number of sick days, and decrease potential complications.

In contrast to the rapid diagnostic test --about 10 minutes in the doctor's office -- results for a traditional viral culture test can take several days because a fluid sample is sent to a laboratory. While the rapid test may cost about \$20, the traditional test can cost \$100. The rapid tests accurately detect 40 to 80 percent of flu cases, so experts warn that everyone needs to be careful in using the test and its findings. In a report co-authored by Michael Shaw, associate director for laboratory science in the Centers for Disease Control influenza division, said, "A quick flu test is just one diagnostic tool. You shouldn't rely on it alone. There's still no substitute for the judgment of the clinician."

The test doesn't differentiate between flu types, only that it has detected one or the other. If a positive result is obtained, the CDC asks healthcare providers to inform their regional public health laboratory promptly and obtain an additional patient specimen for quick transfer to the lab for further characterization of the virus.

Health care professionals may contact Reliable Respiratory for supplies of QuickVue® Influenza A + B Test Kits: 781-551-3335. Reliable Respiratory is a leading supplier of CPAP units for people with sleep disorders, oxygen concentrators, and nebulizers for people suffering from asthma and other lung diseases. (www.ReliableRespiratory.com)

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