WHEN to collect Influenza specimens:
- Within three days of symptom onset, preferably as soon as possible after onset. Specimens collected up to five days after onset of symptoms may be submitted if necessary

Influenza Test Orders:
- MD should specify which Influenza test to order (choice is Influenza PCR or Rapid Influenza A and B)
- Influenza PCR is the recommended test to order as this test is more sensitive/reliable

How to ORDER Influenza testing:
- MD will order Influenza testing in HEO or PICIS (or nurse will enter if telephone order). MD should specify which Influenza test to order

HOW to collect a Nasopharyngeal Swab:
1. A nasopharyngeal swab (not a nasal swab) is required for Influenza testing
2. For Influenza PCR testing and for Rapid Influenza A and B you MUST use either an eSwab with mini tip (has a BLUE cap) Lawson # 019402 or a M4RT Lawson # 0336165 (use the mini tip already in the package).
3. If obtaining BOTH Influenza PCR and Rapid Influenza A and B specimen, a separate swab must be sent for each test
4. Choose the nostril that has the most secretion under visual inspection. Try to obtain as much secretion as possible
5. Insert a dry swab straight back (not upwards) to the nasopharynx until resistance is met at the level of the turbinates. Rotate the swab gently 2-3 times and withdraw slowly

6. Place the swab in the transport media, break off the end of swab so that it fits in the container.
7. Specimens MUST be properly labeled with:
   a. at least 2 patient identifiers (patient full name required plus either DOB or MRN)
   b. specimen source/site=Nasopharyngeal or NP
   c. collection date and time
   d. initials of collector
8. Immediately send labeled specimen and the printed lab requisition to lab