



# Chicago Flu Update



City of Chicago

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

February 4, 2011

Chicago Department of Public Health

Bechara Choucair, MD, Commissioner

## What is the risk?

The risk of influenza infection in Chicago continues to increase. The number of influenza-associated intensive care unit (ICU) hospitalizations has increased by 63% from 8 reported in surveillance week 3 to 13 reported in surveillance week 4. The proportion of specimens testing positive for influenza in local hospitals is at its highest level since November 2009. Influenza A strains continue to predominate with approximately equal percentages of influenza A strains being subtyped as H3N2 and H1N1 (51% and 49% respectively). Influenza B now accounts for approximately 15% of all specimens testing positive for influenza locally. Vaccine is available in doctor's offices, retail pharmacies, CDPH Neighborhood Health Centers, and immunization walk-in clinics. A list of CDPH clinics is available on the [City of Chicago website](http://www.cityofchicago.org)<sup>1</sup> and by calling 311.

## Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

Since October, a total of 33 influenza-associated ICU admissions of Chicago residents have been reported to CDPH (Figure 1).<sup>2</sup> Of these, 13 occurred in patients whose influenza-positive specimens were collected during surveillance week 4 (January 23-29, 2011). Seventy-six percent of ICU patients were 25 years of age or older. The racial/ethnic distribution was 39% Black, 27% White, 21% Hispanic, 6% Asian, and 6% not reported. Twenty-four percent of ICU cases reportedly required intubation and the three underlying medical conditions most frequently cited were asthma and other lung diseases (56%), diabetes (15%), and heart disease (15%). One death in a non-ICU patient was reported in week 52.

## How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

For the week of January 23-29, 2011, with 15 hospitals reporting, 8.8% of emergency room visits were due to ILI (i.e., fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). This is higher than levels reported during the same surveillance week in 2010 (Figure 2). With 5 Chicago ILINet outpatient clinics reporting, 6.1% of doctor's office visits were due to ILI.

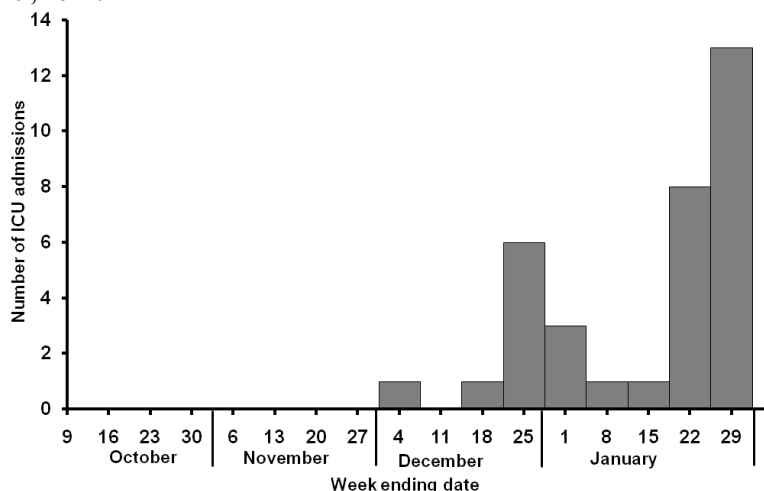
## Which influenza strains are circulating?

With 6 laboratories reporting, 79 (22%) of 363 specimens tested were positive for influenza in week 4. Among 67 specimens that tested positive for influenza A, 17 were subtyped as H3N2, 17 were subtyped as 2009 H1N1, and 33 were not subtyped. Twelve specimens tested positive for influenza B.

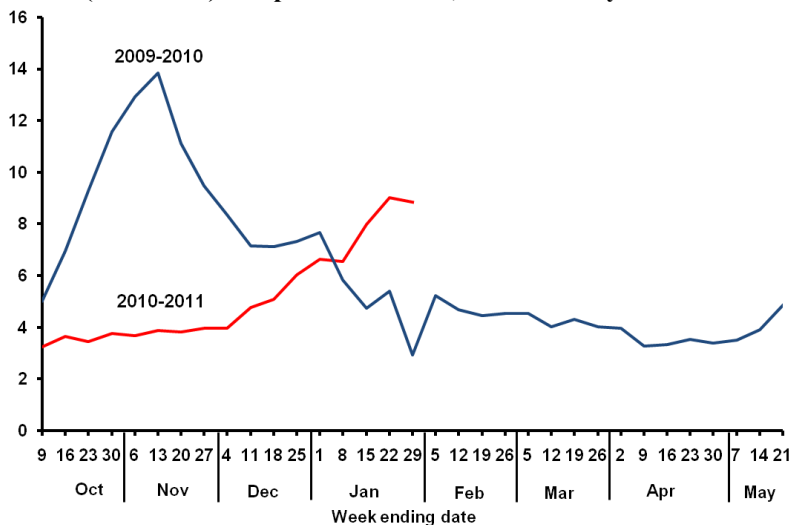
## Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [FluView](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/)<sup>3</sup> report provides national updates and trends related to the intensity of influenza activity across the United States, as well as detailed information on antiviral resistance, severity of illness, and other topics. Updates specific to [Illinois](http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate10-11.htm)<sup>4</sup> and [Suburban Cook County](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation)<sup>5</sup> are also available online.

**Figure 1. Reported number of influenza-associated intensive care unit hospitalizations among Chicago residents, October 9, 2010-January 29, 2011.**



**Figure 2. Weekly reported percent of emergency department visits attributed to influenza-like illness, Chicago, by week, for current season (2010-2011) and previous season, October-May.**



<sup>1</sup>[http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdp/provdrs/clinic/svcs/find\\_a\\_clinic.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdp/provdrs/clinic/svcs/find_a_clinic.html)

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.chicagohan.org/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?p\\_l\\_id=28960&folderId=24344&name=DLFE-144.pdf](https://www.chicagohan.org/c/document_library/get_file?p_l_id=28960&folderId=24344&name=DLFE-144.pdf)

<sup>3</sup><http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>; <sup>4</sup><http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate10-11.htm>

<sup>5</sup>[http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu\\_current\\_situation](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation)