



# Chicago Flu Update



City of Chicago

Chicago Department of Public Health

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

February 18, 2011

Bechara Choucair, MD, Commissioner

## What is the risk?

The risk of influenza infection in Chicago remains elevated. Illinois continues to report widespread geographic spread of influenza in the state and the percentage of outpatient doctor's office visits due to influenza-like illness remains at moderate levels. Locally, the number of influenza-associated intensive care unit (ICU) hospitalizations tripled, from 4 cases in surveillance week 5 to 13 reported for surveillance week 6. Influenza A strains account for 86% of all specimens testing positive for influenza, nearly evenly divided between H3N2 and H1N1 subtypes; 14% of influenza-positive specimens are type B. 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 52 influenza-associated ICU admissions of Chicago residents have been reported to CDPH.<sup>2</sup> Of these, 13 occurred in patients whose influenza-positive specimens were collected during surveillance week 6 (February 6-12, 2011). Twelve (23%) of the reported ICU hospitalizations have been for pediatric patients. The racial/ethnic distribution to date is 40% Black, 25% White, 17% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 14% not reported or other. No deaths were reported for week 6. Six deaths have been reported so far this season: 3 in ICU patients and 3 in non-ICU patients; all were 60 years of age or older.

## How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

For the week of February 6-12, 2011, with 17 hospitals reporting, 6.6% 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 but represents the second consecutive week in which the proportion decreased (Figure 1). With 8 Chicago doctor's offices reporting, 2.5% of visits were due to ILI. CDC uses data collected by ILINet providers to produce a measure of ILI activity by state (Figure 2).

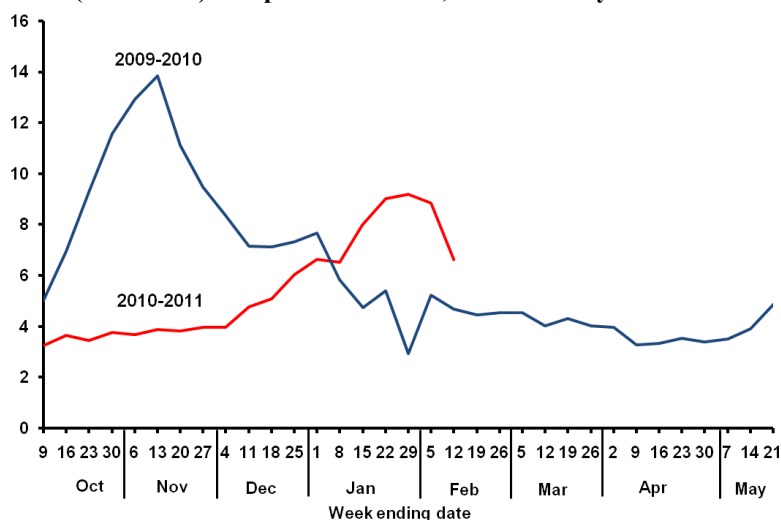
## Which influenza strains are circulating?

With seven laboratories reporting, 85 (18.1%) of 470 specimens tested were positive for influenza in week 6. Although more specimens were submitted for testing this week compared to last, the percentage testing positive dropped 6 points. Among 73 specimens that tested positive for influenza A, 21 were subtyped as H3N2, 21 were subtyped as 2009 H1N1, and 31 were not subtyped. Twelve specimens tested positive for influenza B.

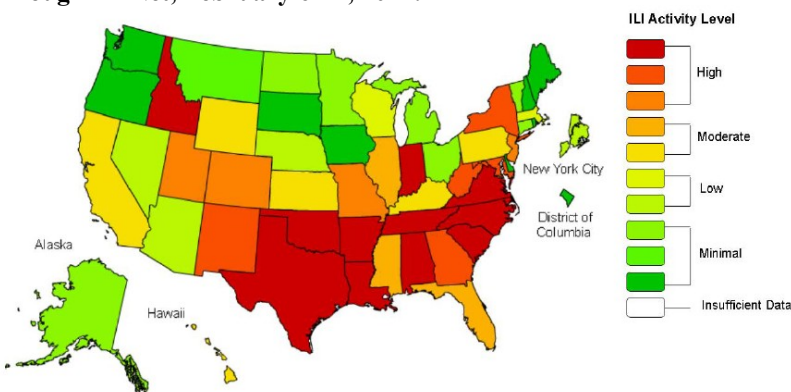
## Where can I get more information?

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. 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.**



**Figure 2. Influenza-like illness (ILI) activity\* level by state, determined using the proportion of doctor's office visits due to ILI as reported through ILINet, February 6-12, 2011.**



\* activity levels are compared to the average percent of ILI visits during the spring and fall weeks when little or no influenza virus circulation is occurring. Minimal activity corresponds to ILI activity below the average and high activity corresponds to ILI activity much higher than the average. Data is preliminary and may change as more data is received.

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