News & Updates
At the midpoint of the influenza season, the number of reported influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations has surpassed the total number of reported ICU hospitalizations for any season since 2010-2011 (Figure 1). Also, specimens testing positive for influenza B have continued to increase for the past several weeks. It’s not too late to get a flu shot; vaccination is the best way to protect against influenza infection and all Chicagoans aged six months and older are encouraged to get vaccinated. In partnership with Walgreens pharmacy, CDPH has made additional influenza vaccine available for no out-of-pocket cost to individuals who are uninsured or unable to pay; see the January 23rd press release for specific pharmacy locations. Also available is the City’s easy-to-use interactive map to find a location near you to get a flu shot and more information about how to stay healthy is available on CDPH’s website.

What is the risk?
Currently, the risk of influenza infection is high.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?
For the week of January 21-27, 2018, 49 influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations were reported (Figure 1).

Since October 1, 2017, 323 influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations have been reported; 297 were positive for influenza A (92 H3N2, 13 H1N1, and 192 unknown subtype [subtyping not attempted or not all subtypes tested]) and 26 were positive for influenza B. The median age of reported cases is 62 years (range of 5 days-102 years); two pediatric deaths were reported including one ICU hospitalization; selected attributes are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected attributes of influenza-associated intensive care unit hospitalizations reported for Chicago residents during the 2017-2018 season, October-May

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Med. Cond./Complication†</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Lung Disease</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Cardiac Disease</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥65</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ventilator Support</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH-White</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Reported Deaths‡</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH-Black</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Treatment/Vaccination†</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Reported Antiviral Tx</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reported Flu Shot</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding; ‡As reported in ILEDSS (Illinois Electronic Disease Surveillance System); †Date of death occurring within one week of positive influenza test among reported influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations.

Which influenza strains are circulating?
Data on influenza virus test results are reported by Chicago laboratories performing influenza RT-PCR. For the week of January 21-27, 2018, with 6 laboratories reporting, 525 of the 1,601 (32.8%) specimens tested for influenza were positive [169 A (H3N2), 16 A (H1N1)pdm09, 272 A unknown subtype and 68 influenza B] (Figure 2). Since October 1, 2017, 2,487 of 14,977 (16.6%) specimens tested for influenza have been positive; 2,289 typed as influenza A (808 H3N2, 116 (H1N1)pdm09, 1,365 unknown subtype [subtyping not performed or not all subtypes tested]) and 198 typed as influenza B.

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?
CDPH receives data from several hospitals in Chicago that provide emergent care, which report on a weekly basis the total number of emergency department visits, and of those visits, the number with influenza-like illness (fever of 100°F or greater and cough and/or sore throat). For the week of January 21-27, 2018, with seven hospitals reporting, 5.1% of emergency department visits were due to ILI (Figure 3).

http://chicagoflushots.org

All data are preliminary and may change as more reports are received.
In addition to emergency departments, several outpatient clinics throughout Chicago participate in CDC’s Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) by also reporting on a weekly basis the total number of outpatient clinic visits, and of those visits, the number with influenza-like illness (ILI). For the week of January 21-27, 2018, with 22 facilities reporting, 3.2% of outpatient clinic visits were due to influenza-like illness (Figure 4).

**ESSENCE** is an electronic syndromic surveillance system used to monitor influenza-like illness by utilizing the chief complaints of patients visiting emergency departments. Currently, all Chicago hospitals submit data to ESSENCE on a daily basis, covering every emergency department visit in the city. For the week of January 21-27, 2018, 1,988 of the 28,269 (7.0%) total emergency department visits were due to influenza-like illness (ILI); children less than five years of age had the highest percentage of visits due to ILI at 17.4%

**Figure 5** represents the percentage of emergency department visits due to influenza-like illness aggregated by patient zip code. For the week of January 21-27, 2018, 50 of 59 (84.8%) zip codes had ILI activity levels in the moderate to high categories and 9 (15.2%) had ILI activity levels in the minimal to low categories; the median percent ILI was 5.8% with a range from <1% to 18.2% (Figure 6).

**Where can I get more information?**
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s FluView® 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® and Suburban Cook County® are also available online. Current and archived issues of the Chicago Flu Update can be found on the CDPH website section Current Flu Situation in Chicago®.

**Reporting Information**
The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has issued influenza testing and reporting recommendations® healthcare facilities can report cases to the Chicago Department of Public Health via the Illinois National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (INEDSS)®.

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6 [http://cookcountypublichealth.org/data-reports/communicable-diseases](http://cookcountypublichealth.org/data-reports/communicable-diseases)
9 [https://dph.partner.illinois.gov/](https://dph.partner.illinois.gov/)