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

**Are severe cases of influenza occurring?**
For the week of February 17-23, 2019, 8 influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations were reported (Figure 1).

Since September 30, 2018, 152 influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations have been reported; 144 were positive for influenza A (69 H1N1pdm09, 3 H3N2, and 72 unknown subtype [subtyping not attempted or not all subtypes tested]) and eight were positive for influenza B. The median age of reported cases is 56.5 years (range 1 month-92 years); one pediatric death was reported and eight cases were admitted from long-term care facilities; selected attributes are summarized in Table 1.

**Which influenza strains are circulating?**
Data on influenza virus test results are reported by Chicago laboratories performing influenza RT-PCR.

For the week of February 17-23, 2019, with 5 laboratories reporting, 158 of the 993 (15.9%) specimens tested for influenza were positive; 153 typed as influenza A (44 H1N1pdm09, 9 H3N2, and 100 unknown subtype) and five typed as influenza B (Figure 2).

Since September 30, 2018, 1,336 of 17,637 (7.6%) specimens tested for influenza have been positive; 1,313 typed as influenza A (400 H1N1pdm09, 34 H3N2, and 879 unknown subtype [subtyping not performed or not all subtypes tested]) and 23 typed as influenza B.

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1. [Link to temporary hospital visitor restrictions](https://www.chicagohan.org/documents/14171/39923/IDPH+2019+Influenza+Hospital+Visitor+Restrictions/ca920705-b756-4ebd-85b8-a65fed206bce.pdf)
How much influenza-like illness is occurring?
Several outpatient clinics throughout Chicago participate in CDC’s Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) by 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 February 17-23, 2019, 117 of the 5,619 (2.1%) reported outpatient clinic visits were due to influenza-like illness, which is lower than Illinois (3.2%), Region 5 (3.0%) and the U.S. (5.0%) (Figure 3).

In addition to ILINet, ESSENCE is an electronic syndromic surveillance system that utilizes the chief complaints of patients visiting emergency departments to monitor for influenza-like illness. Currently, ESSENCE captures nearly every emergency department visit in the city on a daily basis. For the week of February 17-23, 2019, 650 of the 24,885 (2.6%) total emergency department visits were due to influenza-like illness (Figure 4).

Figure 5 represents the percentage of emergency department visits due to influenza-like illness aggregated by patient zip code. For the week of February 17-23, 2019, 35 of 59 (59%) zip codes had ILI activity levels in the moderate to high categories; this is lower than last season where 83% of zip codes were at moderate to high levels for the same time period (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. In addition, The Chicago Department of Public Health recently issued guidance on reporting influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations. Healthcare facilities can report cases to the Chicago Department of Public Health via the Illinois National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (INEDSS).