News & Updates

This will be the last Chicago Flu Update issued for the 2019-2020 influenza season. The next update will be issued in October 2020. CDPH will continue to monitor surveillance indicators throughout the summer months. Influenza viruses are detected throughout the year at low levels and can cause disease. Vaccination is the best way to protect against influenza infection and all Chicagoans six months and older are encouraged to get vaccinated annually.

What is the risk?

Currently, the risk of influenza infection is low.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

For the week of May 10-16, 2020, no influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations were reported (Figure 1).

Since September 29, 2019, 479 influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations have been reported; 370 (77%) were positive for influenza A (8 H3N2, 123 H1N1pdm09, 239 unknown subtype [subtyping not performed or not all subtypes tested]) and 109 (23%) were positive for influenza B. The median age of influenza A cases is 55 years and the median age of influenza B cases is 37 years (overall range of 1 month-96 years); four pediatric deaths were reported, and 15 outbreaks in long-term care facilities; selected attributes are summarized in Table 1. *total case counts may change as additional information is received.

Table 1. Selected attributes of influenza-associated intensive care unit hospitalizations reported for Chicago residents during the 2019-2020 season, October-May.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>229</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Med. Cond./Complication</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Lung Disease</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Cardiac Disease</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥65</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NH-White</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reported Deaths</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>NH-Black</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Treatment/Vaccination</td>
<td>292</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Reported Antiviral Tx</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reported Flu Shot</td>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One patient missing age and race/ethnicity at time of report; † Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding; ‡ As reported in INEDSS (Illinois National Electronic Disease Surveillance System).

Which influenza strains are circulating?

Data on influenza virus test results are reported by Chicago laboratories performing influenza RT-PCR. For the week of May 10-16, 2020, 2 of the 401 reported specimens that were tested for influenza were positive (Figure 2).

Since September 29, 2019, 6,656 of the 43,830 (15%) reported specimens that were tested for influenza have been positive; 4,165 (63%) typed as influenza A (68 H3N2, 1,329 H1N1pdm09, and 2,768 unknown subtype [subtyping not performed or not all subtypes tested]) and 2,491 (37%) typed as influenza B. The cumulative percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza this season is higher than last season (11%) and similar to the 2017-2018 season (16%) for the same time period (Figure 3). $
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 May 10-16, 2020, 15 of the 4,616 (<1%) reported outpatient clinic visits were due to influenza-like illness (Figure 4).

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 May 10-16, 2020, 406 of the 15,655 (2.6%) total emergency department visits were due to influenza-like illness (Figure 5).

Figure 6 represents the percentage of emergency department visits due to influenza-like illness aggregated by Chicago patient zip codes. For the week of May 10-16, 2020, 24 of 59 (41%) zip codes had moderate to high ILI activity levels; this is the eighth consecutive week where the percentage of zip codes at moderate to high levels has decreased, however remains higher than last season where 15 of 59 (25%) zip codes were at moderate to high levels for the same time period.

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 Illinois Department of Public Health has issued Influenza Testing and Reporting Guidance. The Chicago Department of Public Health has previously 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). For more information contact: SyndromicSurveillance@cityofchicago.org

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**Figure 4.** Percent of medically-attended outpatient visits attributed to influenza-like illness as reported by ILINet facilities, Chicago, by week for the current season (2019-2020) and previous two seasons, October-May.

**Figure 5.** Percent of emergency department visits attributed to influenza-like illness for Chicago zip codes based on chief complaint data submitted to ESSENCE, Chicago, by week, for the current season (2019-2020) and previous two seasons, October-May.

**Figure 6.** Influenza-like Illness (ILI) activity level by Chicago patient zip codes determined by chief complaint data submitted to ESSENCE, Chicago, for week of May 10-16, 2020 (Week 20)

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3. [https://cdphchicagoapps.io/influenza/](https://cdphchicagoapps.io/influenza/)
6. [https://ccdphchicagoapps.io/influenza/](https://ccdphchicagoapps.io/influenza/)
7. [https://www.chicagohan.org/documents/14171/39923/Reporting+Influenza+Associated+ICU+Hospitalizations/bc2f49b2-cf74-487c-9441-0b0a930e4b41](https://www.chicagohan.org/documents/14171/39923/Reporting+Influenza+Associated+ICU+Hospitalizations/bc2f49b2-cf74-487c-9441-0b0a930e4b41)

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All data are preliminary and may change as more reports are received.