Chicago Flu Update

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The Quick View heat graph represents the varying level of intensity among the five influenza surveillance indicators that are routinely monitored during the influenza season (Figures 1-5).

News & Updates  This will be the last Chicago Flu Update issued for the 2016-2017 influenza surveillance season. The next update will be issued in October 2017. CDPH will continue to monitor surveillance indicators throughout the summer months. The 22nd Annual Chicago Infection Control Conference will be held on June 9th, 2017 at the Chicago Cultural Center; visit the Chicago HAN¹ website for more information and to register.

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

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?  For the week of May 14-20, 2017, no influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations were reported (Figure 1).

Since October 2, 2016, 275 influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations have been reported; 185 were positive for influenza A (108 H3N2, 2 H1N1pdm09 and 75 unknown subtype [subtyping not attempted or not all subtypes tested]) and 90 were positive for influenza B. The median age of reported cases is 62 years (range of 1 month - 100 years). Seventeen deaths have been reported among ICU cases including two pediatric patients and 19 (7.0%) cases were admitted from long-term care facilities; selected characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

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 (ILI) (i.e., fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). For the week of May 14-20, 2017, with 7 hospitals reporting, 1.6% of emergency department visits were due to ILL (Figure 2).

ESSENCE is an electronic syndromic surveillance system that utilizes emergency department chief complaint data submitted daily by Chicago hospitals; ILL activity is determined solely based on the patient’s chief complaint and does not take into account the entire medical record, as the ILL activity reported in Figure 2 does.

¹https://chicagohan.org/web/han

All data are preliminary and may change as more reports are received.
Currently, all Chicago hospitals submit data to ESSENCE, covering every emergency department visit in the city. For the week of May 14-20, 2017, 1.3% of all emergency department visits were due to ILI; Southside hospitals had slightly higher ILI at 1.6%, Northside hospitals at 1.3% and Westside hospitals had slightly lower ILI at 1.1% (Figure 3).

Several outpatient clinics throughout Chicago participate in CDC’s Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) by reporting on the number of patients with ILI seen weekly. For the week of May 14-20, 2017, with 21 facilities reporting, 3.8% of outpatient visits were due to influenza-like illness (Figure 4).

**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 14-20, 2017, with 5 laboratories reporting, 6 of the 363 (1.6%) specimens tested for influenza were positive (1 A (H3N2), 1 A (H1N1pdm09), 0 A [unknown subtype], and 4 influenza B).

Since October 2, 2016, 2,086 of 21,434 (9.7%) specimens tested for influenza have been positive; 1,262 typed as influenza A (1,079 H3N2, 22 H1N1pdm09, and 161 unknown subtype [subtyping not attempted or not all subtypes tested]) and 824 typed as influenza B (Figure 5). This season, influenza B accounted for 39% of all specimens testing positive for influenza; this is the highest percentage since the 2011-2012 season where over half (51%) were positive for influenza B (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.