Chicago Department of Public Health

Chicago Flu Update

City of Chicago
Richard M. Daley, Mayor

January 15, 2010

Chicago Department of Public Health
Bechara Choucair, MD, Commissioner

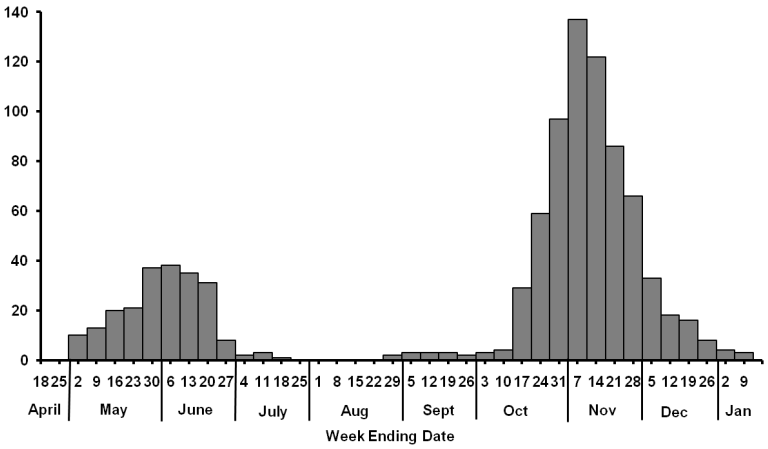
What is the risk?

As of January 15, 2010, the risk of pandemic influenza A (H1N1) influenza infection in Chicago continues to be low. The numbers of severe influenza infections, influenza-like illnesses, and positive influenza tests have all decreased. Due to the possibility of a recurrence of heightened activity in the coming months, all Chicagoans aged six months and older are encouraged to protect themselves from infection by getting vaccinated with the pandemic influenza vaccine. Chicagoans should ask their healthcare provider or pharmacist about vaccine availability. For those without a healthcare provider or whose healthcare providers do not have the pandemic vaccine, a schedule of City of Chicago pandemic vaccine clinics[1] is available on the City website and by calling 311.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

Three confirmed or presumptive pandemic influenza A (H1N1)-associated hospitalizations in Chicago residents have been reported for surveillance week 1 (January 3 – 9, 2010). This is a 98% decrease from the highest reported weekly count of the fall, reported in early November, and represents the ninth consecutive week that a decline has been noted (figure 1).

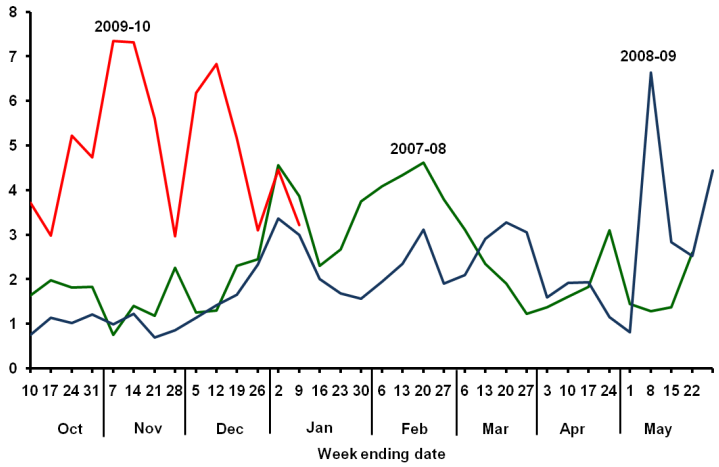
Figure 1. Reported number of hospitalizations associated with confirmed or presumptive pandemic influenza A (H1N1), Chicago, by week of specimen collection, April 2009 - January 9, 2010



How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

With 14 Chicago hospitals reporting, 5.0% of emergency department visits were due to influenza-like illness (i.e. fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). This represents the lowest activity level reported since early October and a 41% decrease from the previous surveillance week. Among five outpatient clinics reporting for the week of January 3 – 9, 2010, 3.2% of doctor's office visits were due to influenza-like illness. This level of activity is similar to levels seen during the same surveillance week during previous influenza seasons (figure 2).

Figure 2. Percent of patient visits to enrolled doctor's offices attributed to influenza-like illness, Chicago, by week, for current season (2009-10) and previous two seasons, October-May



Which influenza strains are circulating?

For the week of January 3 – 9, 2010, with six laboratories reporting, all 9 influenza A-positive specimens for which subtyping was performed were reported as confirmed or presumptive pandemic influenza A (H1N1); one influenza B strain was also reported.

Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's FluView[2] 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[3] and Suburban Cook County[4] are also available online.

[1] http://egov.cityofchicago.org/webportal/COCWebPortal/COC_EDITORIAL/JanuaryScheduleH1N1_enlgish.pdf;

[2] http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/; [3] http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate08-09.htm; [4] http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation