



# Chicago Flu Update



City of Chicago

Richard M. Daley, Mayor

March 5, 2010

Chicago Department of Public Health

Bechara Choucair, MD, Commissioner

## What is the risk?

As of March 5, 2010, the risk of pandemic influenza A (H1N1) influenza infection in Chicago is low. The numbers of reported severe influenza infections, influenza-like illnesses, and positive influenza tests remain minimal. 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. Vaccines are available at City of Chicago Fast Track Immunization clinics and neighborhood health centers; hours and locations are available by calling 311.

## Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

No hospitalizations associated with pandemic influenza A (H1N1) have been reported in Chicago residents for surveillance week 8 (February 21 – 27, 2010) (figure 1).

## How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

With 17 Chicago hospitals reporting, 5.1% of emergency department visits were due to influenza-like illness (i.e. fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). Pediatric hospitals continue to experience higher rates, but in hospitals serving adults levels of activity are comparable to what was reported in September 2009 (figure 2). Among ten outpatient clinics reporting for the week of February 21 – 27, 2010, 1.3% of doctor's office visits were due to influenza-like illness. This level of activity is lower than levels seen during the same surveillance week during previous influenza seasons.

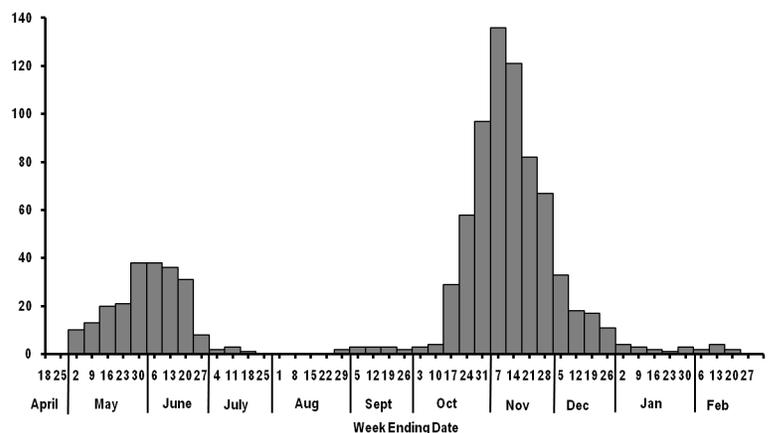
## Which influenza strains are circulating?

For the week of February 21 – 27, 2010, with six laboratories reporting, all seven of the influenza A-positive specimens for which subtyping was performed were reported as presumptive pandemic influenza A (H1N1). No seasonal influenza A or influenza B strains were reported. Throughout the first eight weeks of 2010, the weekly percentage of specimens tested that were positive for influenza has remained below 3%, compared to the maximum of 36% in late October 2009.

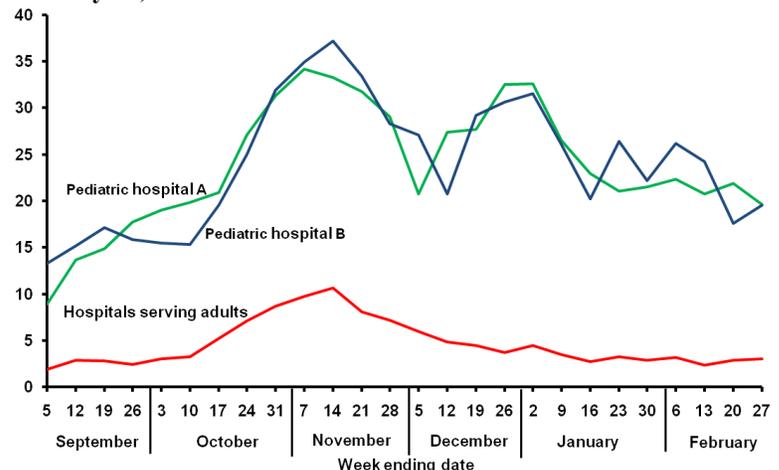
## Where can I get more information?

[The February edition of CDPH's CD Info newsletter](http://egov.cityofchicago.org/webportal/COCWebPortal/COC_EDITORIAL/CDInfoNewsletterFebruary.pdf)<sup>1</sup> provides supplemental information about the surveillance and investigation of the 2009 pandemic in Chicago. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [FluView](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/)<sup>2</sup> 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](http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate09-10.htm)<sup>3</sup> and [Suburban Cook County](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation)<sup>4</sup> are also available online.

**Figure 1. Reported number of hospitalizations associated with confirmed or presumptive pandemic influenza A (H1N1), Chicago, by week of specimen collection, April 2009—February 27, 2010**



**Figure 2. Weekly reported percent of emergency department visits attributed to influenza-like illness in two Chicago pediatric hospitals, and all Chicago hospitals serving adults (combined), August 30, 2009—February 27, 2010.**



<sup>1</sup> [http://egov.cityofchicago.org/webportal/COCWebPortal/COC\\_EDITORIAL/CDInfoNewsletterFebruary.pdf](http://egov.cityofchicago.org/webportal/COCWebPortal/COC_EDITORIAL/CDInfoNewsletterFebruary.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>; <sup>3</sup> <http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate09-10.htm>; <sup>4</sup> [http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu\\_current\\_situation](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/flu_current_situation)