

## Influenza and Influenza-like Illness Surveillance

MMWR Week 51  
December 14-20, 2008

### Media Talking Points

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#### Activity Level: **No Activity**

- Definition: No laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza and no reported increase in the number of cases of influenza-like illness (ILI).

#### Surveillance Data:

- Influenza-like Illness (ILI) Sentinel Providers reported 0.18% of patients had ILI signs and symptoms. Influenza-like Illness is defined as a fever ( $\geq 100^{\circ}$  F), **and** cough and/or sore throat. Temperature can be measured in the physician's office or at home.
- Over-the-counter (OTC) sales did not experience a statistically significant deviation from the expected.
- Emergency department visits experienced a statistically significant deviation from the expected in four regions.
- ODH lab has not reported any positive confirmed isolates (total through 12/23/08).
- No pediatric influenza-associated mortality reports have been made (through 12/23/08).

#### Analysis Considerations:

- No significant or confirmed geographic clustering of any data was detected.
- No outbreaks are indicated.
- Anecdotal reports of low levels of influenza activity have been reported from varying regions around the state in recent weeks, including increasing emergency department visits with chief complaints of flu-like symptoms, cases that have tested positive by point of care rapid diagnostic test kits, and one hospitalization. Care should be given when relying on results of point of care rapid diagnostic test kits during times when influenza is not circulating widely. The sensitivity and specificity of these tests vary and the positive predictive value may be low outside of the time of peak influenza activity. Therefore, the Ohio Department of Health Laboratory (ODHL) conducts culture confirmation for influenza testing, and these results are used in conjunction with other data sources to determine Ohio's influenza activity level each week. Since there have been no positive confirmed isolates reported from the ODHL, the influenza activity level is currently **No Activity**.

#### Oseltamivir Resistance among circulating influenza A (H1N1) viruses:

On December 19, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a Health Advisory, in which they issued interim recommendations for the use of influenza antiviral medications for the 2008-2009 influenza season. The changes made to the current recommendations were in response to increasing evidence of oseltamivir (Tamiflu) resistance among circulating influenza A (H1N1) viruses.

Based on the new recommendations, the selection of antiviral treatment is now largely dependent on which influenza virus subtypes are circulating in our area. Therefore, up to date influenza surveillance data is critical. Please recommend that local clinicians, hospitals and laboratories submit their facility's next 2-3 positive influenza specimens to the Ohio Department of Health Laboratory for viral culture and subtyping. These specimens will help identify which influenza viruses are circulating in Ohio and will support decision-making for treatment options under the new interim recommendations. If needed, contact Shannon Page for more information on specimen collection and shipping instructions.

Early national surveillance data indicates that, at this time, the currently circulating influenza viruses appear to be well-matched to this season's influenza vaccine. Please continue to promote influenza vaccination throughout the winter and into spring.

National activity levels and more information can be found at the following CDC pages:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/usmap.htm>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

If you have any further questions or comments about surveillance for seasonal influenza for the State of Ohio, please contact Shannon Page at [Shannon.Page@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:Shannon.Page@odh.ohio.gov) or by telephone at (614) 466-0456.