



Chicago Flu Update



Rahm Emanuel, Mayor

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News & Updates

Influenza activity continues to decrease, but remains elevated in Chicago and across the U.S. Vaccination is the best way to protect against influenza infection and all Chicagoans aged six months and older are encouraged to get vaccinated. 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 influenza vaccine, a list of [City of Chicago Fast-Track Immunization Clinics](#)¹ is available on the City website and by calling 311. To locate the closest City of Chicago clinic or retail pharmacy, go to www.chicagoflushots.org.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has issued [influenza testing and reporting recommendations](#)²; healthcare facilities can report cases to the Chicago Department of Public Health via [INEDSS](#)³.

What is the risk?

Currently, the risk of influenza infection is high.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

For the week of March 19-25, 2017, 12 influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations were reported (**Figure 1**).

Since October 2, 2016, 224 influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations have been reported; 161 were positive for influenza A (94 H3N2, 1 H1N1pdm09 and 66 unknown subtype [subtyping not attempted or not all subtypes tested]) and 63 were positive for influenza B. The median age of reported cases is 60 years (range of 1 month - 100 years). Thirteen deaths have been reported among ICU cases including two pediatric patients and 15 cases were admitted from long-term care facilities; selected characteristics are summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Selected attributes of influenza-associated intensive care unit hospitalizations reported for Chicago residents for current season (2016-2017), October-May.

Age Group	#	%*	Sex	#	%
0-4	23	10	Male	106	47
5-17	27	12	Female	118	53
18-24	5	2	Med. Cond./Complication [†]		
25-49	28	13	Lung Disease	74	33
50-64	46	21	Cardiac Disease	62	28
≥65	95	42	Diabetes	55	25
			Ventilator Support	60	27
Race/Ethnicity			Treatment/Vaccination [†]		
NH-White	64	29	Reported Deaths	13	6
NH-Black	86	38	Reported Antiviral Tx	158	71
Hispanic	61	27	Reported Flu Shot	91	41
Asian	13	6			

* Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding; † As reported in INEDSS (Illinois National Electronic Disease Surveillance System).

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

CDPH receives data from influenza surveillance sites across Chicago, which report the total number of patient visits seen weekly, and of those visits, the number with influenza-like illness (ILI) (i.e., fever of 100°F or greater, with cough or sore throat). Several hospitals in Chicago that provide emergent care report on a weekly basis the total number of emergency department visits, and of those visits, the number with ILI. For the week of March 19-25, 2017, with 9 hospitals reporting, 4.5% of emergency department visits were due to ILI (**Figure 2**).

ESSENCE is an electronic syndromic surveillance system that utilizes emergency department chief complaint data

Figure 1. Number of influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations reported for Chicago residents, for the current season (2016-2017) by influenza type, October-May.

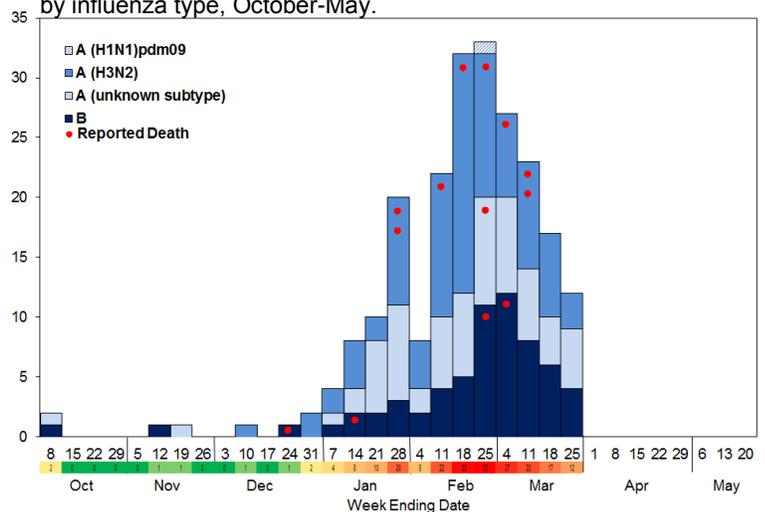
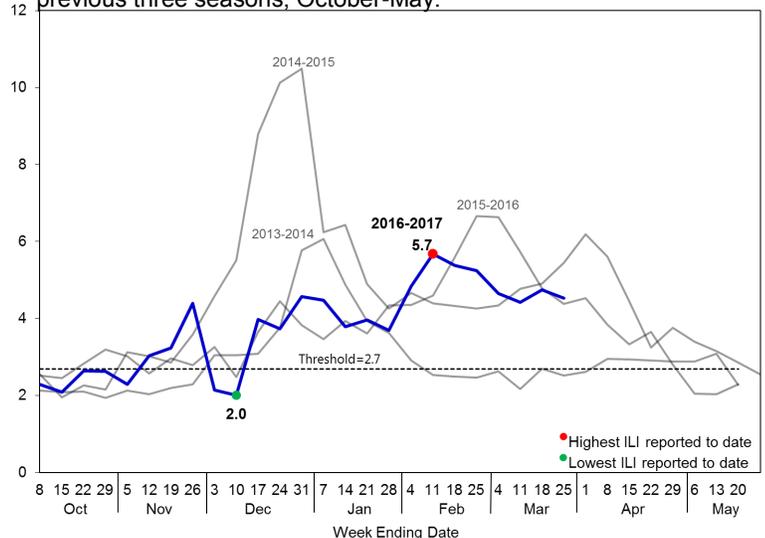


Figure 2. Percent of emergency department visits attributed to influenza-like illness based on manual reports by individual hospitals, Chicago, by week, for the current season (2016-2017) and previous three seasons, October-May.



¹ https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdph/supp_info/clinical_health/immunizations_walk-inclinics.html; ² <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ohp-labs-influenzaannual-testing-and-reportingmemo-09222016.pdf>; ³ <https://dph.partner.illinois.gov/>

submitted daily by Chicago hospitals. ILI activity is determined solely based on the patient's chief complaint and does not take into account the entire medical record, as the ILI activity reported in Figure 2 does.

Currently, all Chicago hospitals submit data to ESSENCE, covering every emergency department visit in the city. For the week of March 19-25, 2017, 2.8% of all emergency department visits were due to ILI; Southside hospitals had slightly higher ILI at 3.2%, Northside hospitals had at 2.9% and Westside hospitals at 2.4% (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 March 19-25, 2017, with 24 facilities reporting, 6.2% 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 March 19-25, 2017, with 6 laboratories reporting, 142 of the 807 (17.6%) specimens tested for influenza were positive (55 A (H3N2), 0 A (H1N1pdm09), 8 A [unknown subtype], and 80 influenza B).

Since October 2, 2016, 1,672 of 16,519 (10.1%) specimens tested for influenza have been positive; 1,097 typed as influenza A (936 H3N2, 20 H1N1pdm09, and 141 unknown subtype [subtyping not attempted or not all subtypes tested]) and 576 typed as influenza B (Figure 5). The cumulative percent of specimens testing positive for influenza is lower than previous seasons during the same time period where influenza A (H3N2) was the predominant strain (Table 2).

Table 2. Cumulative percent of specimens testing positive for influenza by RT-PCR by type for the current season (2016-2017) and the previous four seasons, Chicago, Weeks 40-12.

Influenza Season	% Pos.	% A H3N2	% A H1N1pdm09	% A Not Sub-typed	% B
2012-2013*	13.6	70.4	6.1	13.3	10.2
2013-2014	8.2	2.1	68.9	25.0	4.1
2014-2015*	14.7	63.7	0	14.3	21.7
2015-2016	8.5	2.6	75.9	16.6	4.9
2016-2017*	10.1	56.0	1.2	8.4	34.4

* Influenza seasons where A (H3N2) was the predominant circulating strain

Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's FluView⁴ 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 Illinois⁵ and Suburban Cook County⁶ 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](#)⁷.

Figure 3. Percent of emergency department visits attributed to influenza-like illness by hospital region based on chief complaint data submitted to ESSENCE, Chicago, by week, for the current season (2016-2017) and previous three seasons, October-May.

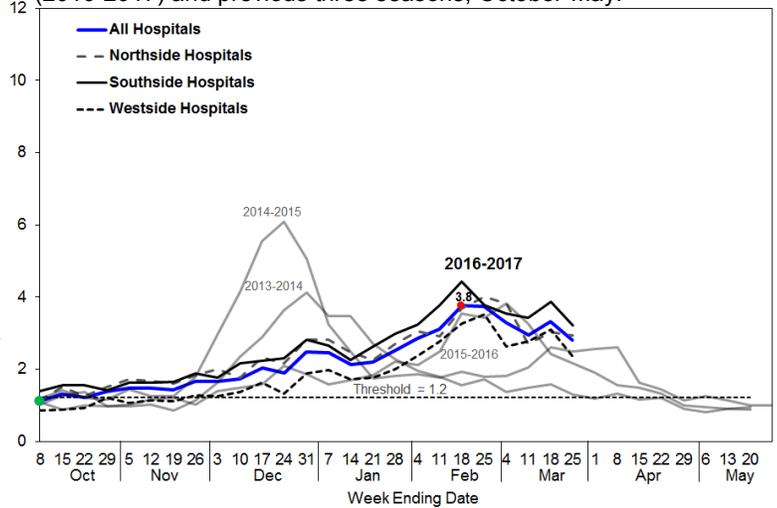


Figure 4. Percent of medically-attended outpatient visits attributed to influenza-like illness as reported by ILINet facilities, Chicago, by week, for the current season (2016-2017) and previous three seasons, October-May.

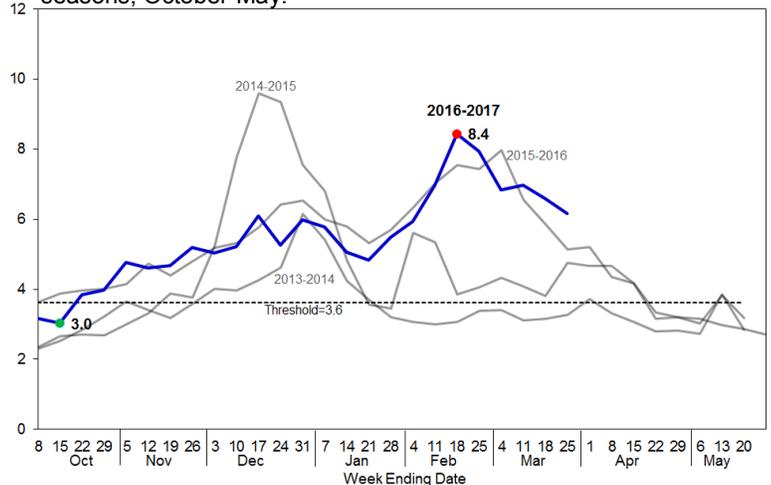
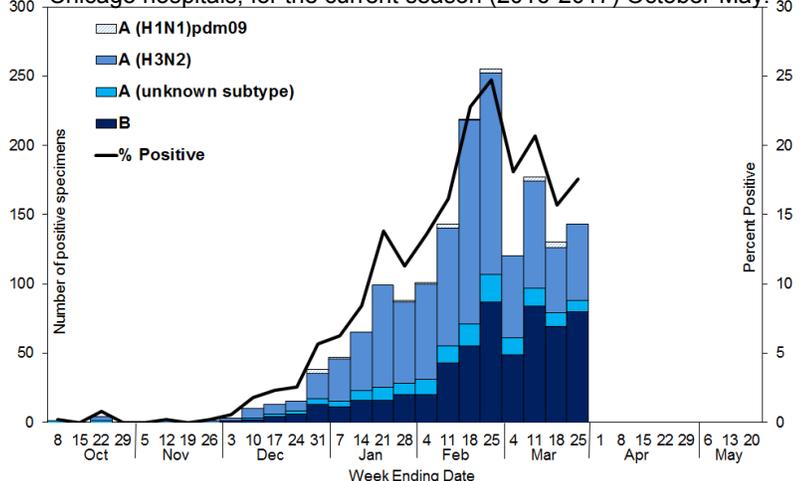


Figure 5. Percent of specimens testing positive (by RT-PCR) for influenza by subtype as reported by local laboratories serving Chicago hospitals, for the current season (2016-2017) October-May.



⁴<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm>; ⁵<http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/surveillance>; ⁶<http://cookcountypublichealth.org/data-reports/communicable-diseases>; ⁷http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdph/supp_info/influenza/current_flu_situationinchicago2011.html