



Chicago Flu Update



Rahm Emanuel, Mayor

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News & Updates

As long as influenza viruses are still circulating and unexpired vaccine is available, influenza vaccinations should continue to be offered. Vaccination is the best way to protect against influenza infection and all Chicagoans aged six months and older are encouraged to get vaccinated. In partnership with Walgreens pharmacy, CDPH has made additional influenza vaccine available for no out-of-pocket cost to individuals who are uninsured or unable to pay; visit the [CDPH website](#)¹ for specific pharmacy locations. Also available is the City's easy-to-use [interactive map](#)² to find a location near you to get a flu shot.

What is the risk?

Currently, the risk of influenza infection continues to decrease.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

For the week of March 18-24, 2018, 10 influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations were reported (**Figure 1**).

Since October 1, 2017, 531 influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations have been reported; 434 were positive for influenza A (135 H3N2, 19 H1N1, and 280 unknown subtype [subtyping not attempted or not all subtypes tested]) and 97 were positive for influenza B. The median age of reported cases is 62 years (range of 5 days-102 years); 55 (10%) cases were admitted from long-term care facilities (LTCF) and 19 outbreaks have been reported in LTCFs; two pediatric deaths were reported including one ICU hospitalization; selected attributes are summarized in **Table 1**.

There were 34 reported deaths[‡] among influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations; twenty-six (76%) were positive for influenza A, 19 (56%) were 65 years of age and older, and five (15%) had a reported influenza vaccination. The median number of days from influenza test performed to death was three days (range of 1-6 days).

Table 1. Selected attributes of influenza-associated intensive care unit hospitalizations reported for Chicago residents during the 2017-2018 season, October-May.

Age Group	#	%	Sex	#	%
0-4	43	8	Male	248	47
5-17	38	7	Female	283	53
18-24	15	3	Med. Cond./Complication[†]		
25-49	66	12	Lung Disease	153	29
50-64	135	25	Cardiac Disease	146	28
≥65	234	44	Diabetes	128	24
Race/Ethnicity			Ventilator Support	129	24
NH-White	135	25	Reported Deaths [‡]	34	6
NH-Black	280	53	Treatment/Vaccination[†]		
Hispanic	100	19	Reported Antiviral Tx	390	73
Asian/Other	16	3	Reported Flu Shot	159	30

[†] Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding; [†] As reported in INEDSS (Illinois National Electronic Disease Surveillance System); [‡] Date of death occurring within one week of positive influenza test among reported influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations.

24,971 (18.5%) specimens tested for influenza have been positive; 3,619 typed as influenza A (1,247 H3N2, 166 (H1N1) pdm09, 2,206 unknown subtype [subtyping not performed or not all subtypes tested]) and 1,008 typed as influenza B. The percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza B continues to increase, accounting for 87% of positive specimens for the current week.

Figure 1. Number of influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations reported for Chicago residents, for the current season (2017-2018) by influenza type and subtype, October-May.

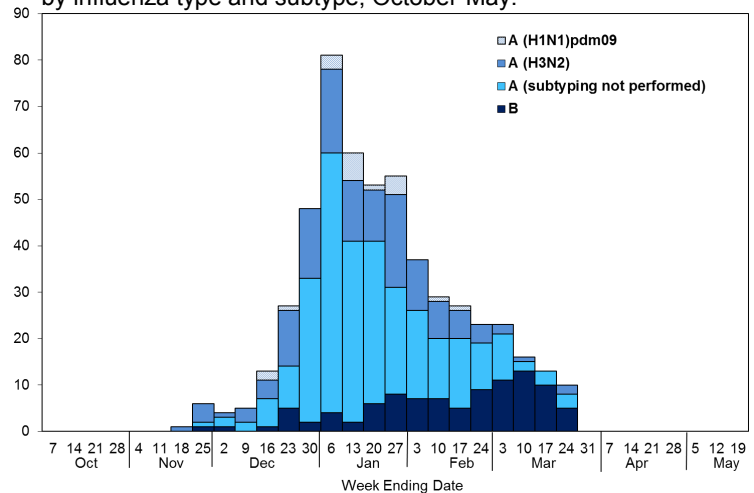
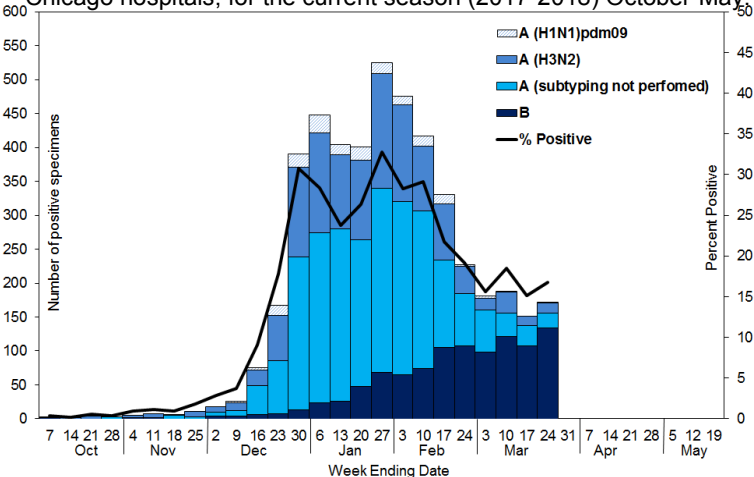


Figure 2. Percent of specimens testing positive (by RT-PCR) for influenza by subtype as reported by local laboratories serving Chicago hospitals, for the current season (2017-2018) October-May.



Which influenza strains are circulating?

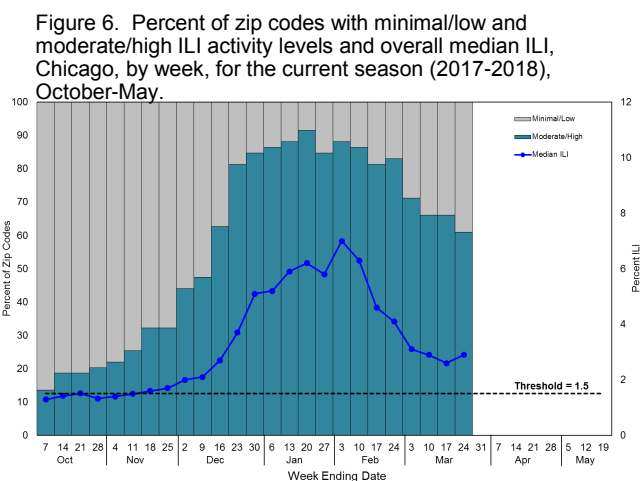
Data on influenza virus test results are reported by Chicago laboratories performing influenza RT-PCR. For the week of March 18-24, 2018, with 6 laboratories reporting, 171 of the 1,017 (16.8%) specimens tested for influenza were positive [15 A (H3N2), 1 A (H1N1) pdm09, 21 A unknown subtype and 134 influenza B] (**Figure 2**). Since October 1, 2017, 4,627 of

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

ESSENCE is an electronic syndromic surveillance system used to monitor influenza-like illness by utilizing the chief complaints of patients visiting emergency departments. Currently, all Chicago hospitals submit data to ESSENCE on a daily basis, covering every emergency department visit in the city. For the week of March 18-24, 2018, 749 of the 25,195 (3.0%) total emergency department visits were due to influenza-like illness (ILI) (**Figure 3**). Children less than five years of age had the highest percentage of visits due to ILI at 10.0%, down from a peak of 19.4% six weeks ago.

In addition to emergency departments, several outpatient clinics throughout Chicago participate in CDC's Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) by also reporting on a weekly basis the total number of outpatient clinic visits, and of those visits, the number with influenza-like illness (ILI). For the week of March 18-24, 2018, with 21 facilities reporting, 2.3% of outpatient clinic visits were due to influenza-like illness (**Figure 4**).

Figure 5 represents the percentage of emergency department visits due to influenza-like illness aggregated by patient zip code. For the week of March 11-17, 2018, 36 of 59 (61%) zip codes had ILI activity levels in the moderate to high categories and 23 (39%) had ILI activity levels in the minimal to low categories; the median percent ILI was 2.9% (range of <1%-7.1%) (**Figure 6**).



Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [FluView](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm)³ 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](https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdpd/supp_info/health-protection/current_flu_situationinchicago2011.html)⁴ and [Suburban Cook County](https://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/data-reports/communicable-diseases)⁵ 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](https://www.cookcountypublichealth.org/data-reports/communicable-diseases)⁶.

Reporting Information

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has issued [influenza testing and reporting recommendations](https://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/testing-recommendations)⁷ healthcare facilities can report cases to the Chicago Department of Public Health via the Illinois National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (INEDSS)⁸

Figure 3. Percent of **emergency department** visits attributed to influenza-like illness for Chicago zip codes based on chief complaint data submitted to **ESSENCE**, Chicago, by week, for the current season (2017-2018) and previous season, October-May.

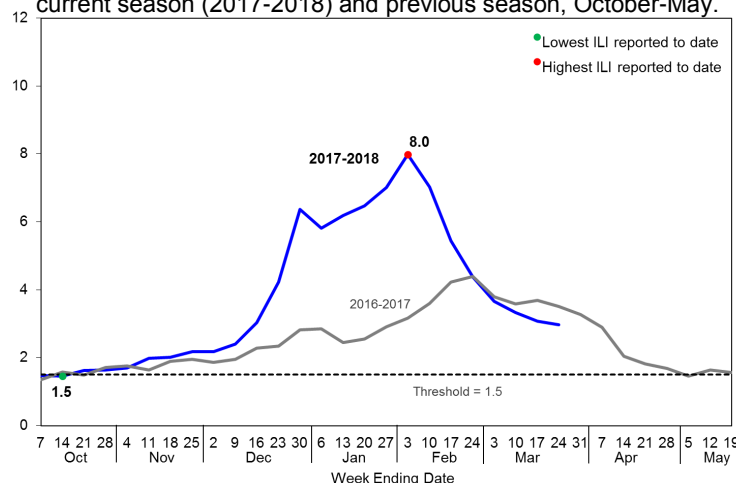


Figure 4. Percent of medically-attended **outpatient** visits attributed to influenza-like illness as reported by **ILINet** facilities, Chicago, by week, for the current season (2017-2018) and previous three seasons, October-May.

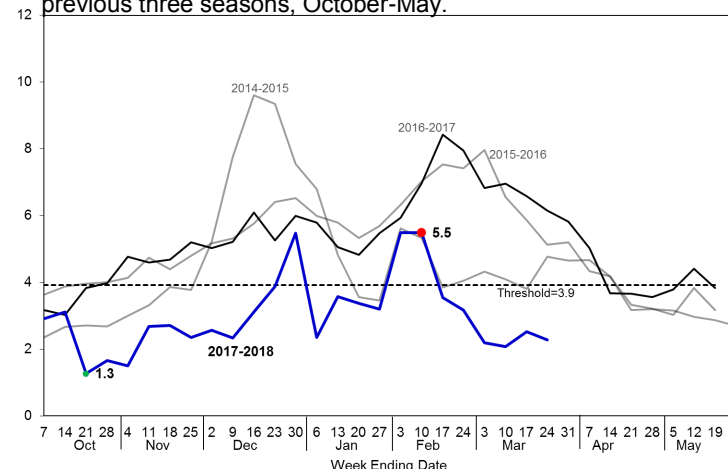
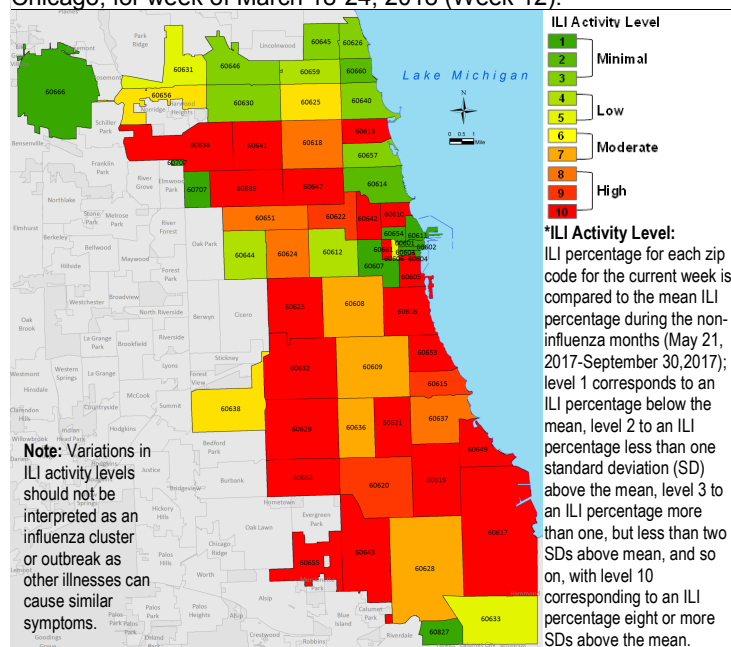


Figure 5. Influenza-like Illness (ILI) activity level by patient zip code determined by chief complaint data submitted to **ESSENCE**, Chicago, for week of March 18-24, 2018 (Week 12).



³ [http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm); ⁴ [http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/surveillance](https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/surveillance); ⁵ [http://cookcountypublichealth.org/data-reports/communicable-diseases](https://cookcountypublichealth.org/data-reports/communicable-diseases); ⁶ https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdpd/supp_info/health-protection/current_flu_situationinchicago2011.html;

⁷ [http://dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/publications/publications-ohp-annual-flu-testing-guidance-10132017.pdf](https://dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/publications/publications-ohp-annual-flu-testing-guidance-10132017.pdf); ⁸ <https://dph.partner.illinois.gov/>