



Chicago Flu Update



Lori E. Lightfoot, Mayor

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News & Updates

Vaccination is the best way to protect against influenza infection and all Chicagoans 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 schedule of [City of Chicago influenza vaccination 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.

What is the risk?

Currently, the risk of influenza infection is low.

Are severe cases of influenza occurring?

For the week of October 20-26, 2019, no influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations were reported (Figure 1).

Long-Term Care ICU Admissions

From 2014-2015 to 2018-2019, 1,788 influenza-associated ICU admissions were reported to CDPH; 143 (8%) were reported to be admitted from a long-term care facility (LTCF) or other congregate setting. Among these admissions, 35 (24%) died within 30 days of their positive influenza test, compared to 221 (13%) among those not reported to be admitted from a LTCF or other congregate setting and the proportion of deaths has increased during the past several seasons (Figure 2). When death certificates were retrospectively matched to all influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations during this period, 439 (80%) deaths occurred within one year of their positive influenza test performed during admission. It is important to report information on influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations that are admitted from a LTCF or congregate setting and to communicate with the facility about residents with a positive influenza test. This will ensure prompt infection control and prevention procedures are implemented.

Figure 2. Percent of deaths among influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations admitted from a LTCF or other congregate setting for the previous five seasons, October-May.

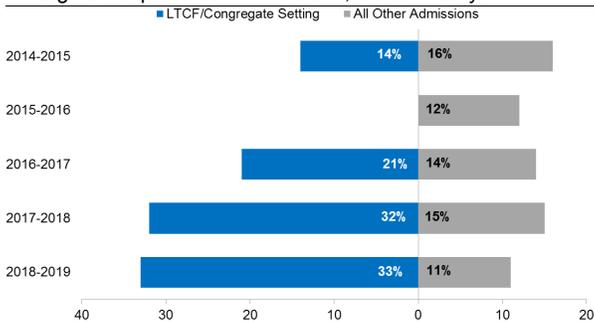


Figure 1. Number of influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations reported for Chicago residents, for the current season (2019-2020) and previous season (2018-2019), October-May.

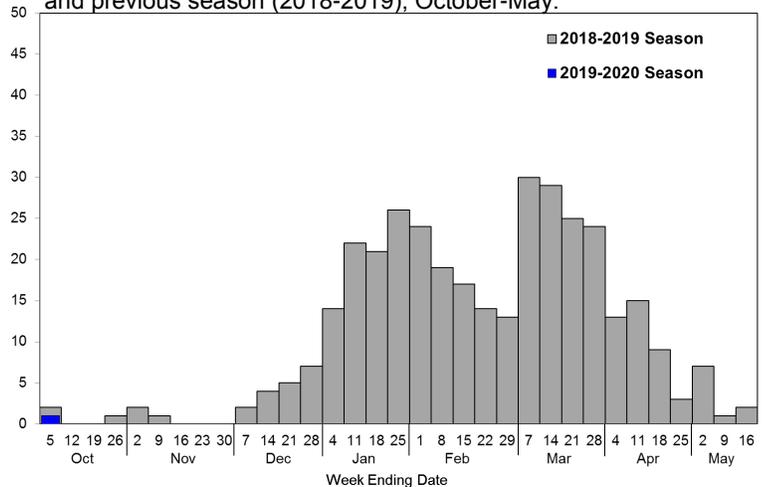
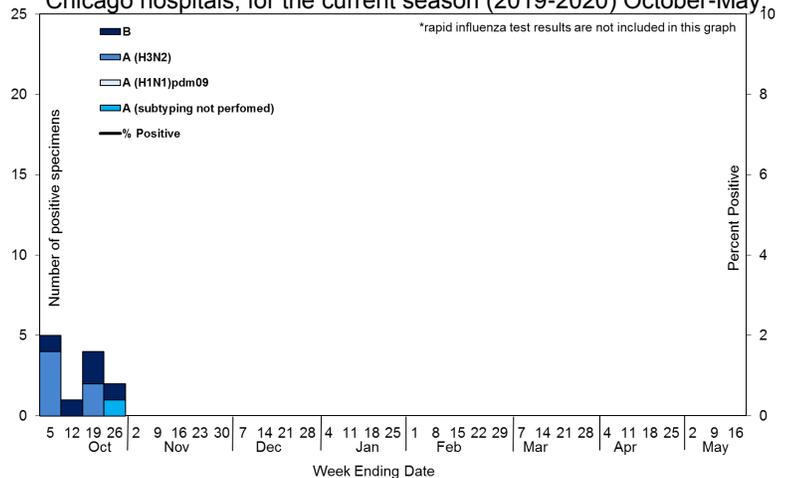


Figure 3. Percent of specimens testing positive (by RT-PCR) for influenza by subtype as reported by local laboratories serving Chicago hospitals, for the current season (2019-2020) October-May.



Which influenza strains are circulating?

Data on influenza virus test results are reported by Chicago laboratories performing influenza RT-PCR. For the week of October 20-26, 2019, 2 of the 724 (<1%) specimens tested for influenza were positive; 1 typed as influenza A unknown subtype [subtyping not performed or not all subtypes tested] and 1 typed as influenza B (Figure 3).

Since September 29, 2019, 12 of 2,955 (<1%) specimens tested for influenza have been positive; 7 typed as influenza A (6 H3N2, 0 H1N1pdm09, and 1 unknown subtype [subtyping not performed or not all subtypes tested]) and 5 typed as influenza B.

All data are preliminary and may change as more reports are received.

¹ https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cdp/supp_info/health-protection/flu-clinics-in-the-city-of-chicago.html

² http://dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/publications/publicationsohpfu-sentinel-recruitment-faq_0.pdf

How much influenza-like illness is occurring?

Several outpatient clinics throughout Chicago participate in CDC's Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) by 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 October 20-26, 2019, 97 of the 5,653 (1.7%) reported outpatient clinic visits were due to influenza-like illness, which is slightly lower than Illinois at 1.9% (Figure 4).

In addition to ILINet, ESSENCE is an electronic syndromic surveillance system that utilizes the chief complaints of patients visiting emergency departments to monitor for influenza-like illness. Currently, ESSENCE captures nearly every emergency department visit in the city on a daily basis. For the week of October 20-26, 2019, 514 of the 23,525 (2.2%) total emergency department visits were due to influenza-like illness (Figure 5).

Figure 6 represents the percentage of emergency department visits due to influenza-like illness aggregated by patient zip code. For the week of October 20-26, 2019, 18 of 59 (31%) zip codes had ILI activity levels in the moderate to high; this is lower than last season where 39% of zip codes were also at moderate to high levels for the same time period.

Where can I get more information?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [FluView](#)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](#)⁴ and [Suburban Cook County](#)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](#)⁶.

Reporting Information

Illinois Department of Public Health recently issued [Influenza Testing and Reporting Guidance](#)⁷. The Chicago Department of Public Health has previously issued guidance on [reporting influenza-associated ICU hospitalizations](#)⁸. Healthcare facilities can report cases to the Chicago Department of Public Health via the Illinois National Electronic Disease Surveillance System (INEDSS)⁹. For more information contact: SyndromicSurveillance@cityofchicago.org

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FLU SHOT**
WWW.CHICAGO.GOV/FLU — * * * * —

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 (2019-2020) and previous season, October-May.

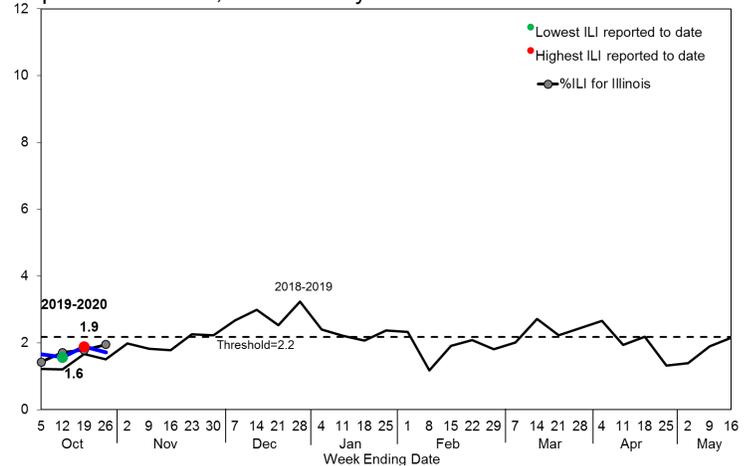


Figure 5. Percent of **emergency department** visits attributed to influenza-like illness for Chicago zip codes based on chief complaint data submitted to **ESSENCE**, Chicago, by week, for the current season (2019-2020) and previous two seasons, October-May.

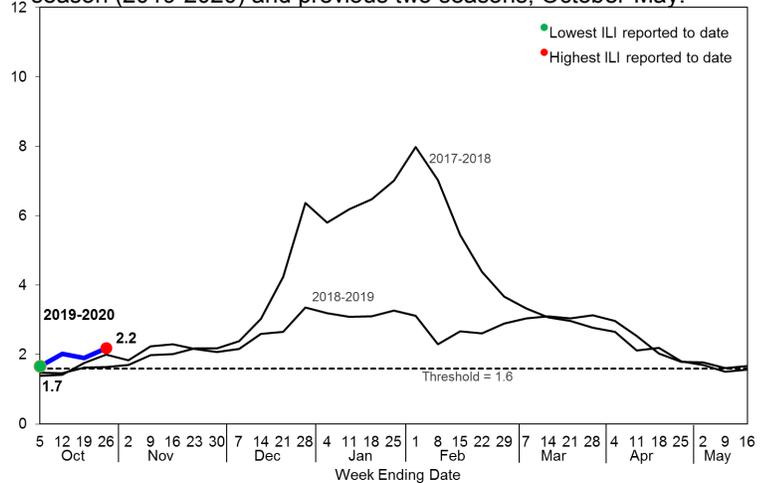
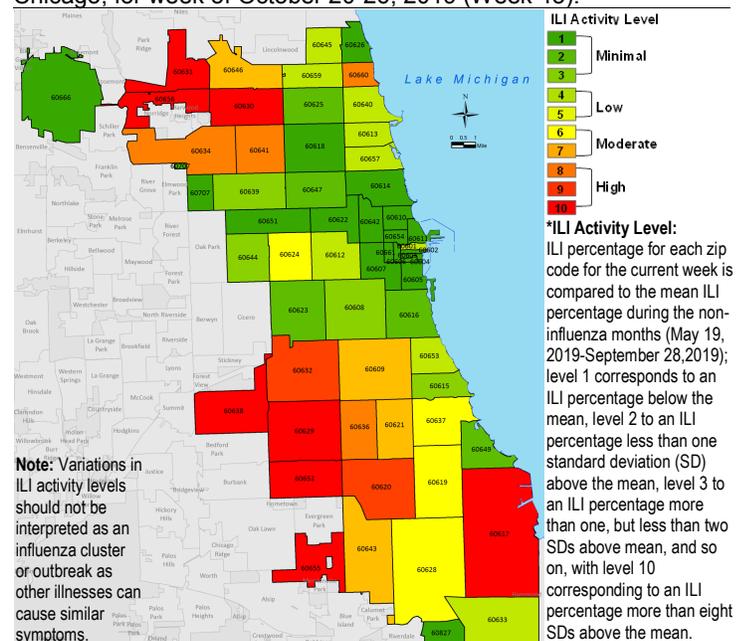


Figure 6. Influenza-like Illness (ILI) activity level by patient zip code determined by chief complaint data submitted to **ESSENCE**, Chicago, for week of October 20-26, 2019 (Week 43).



³ <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm>, ⁴ <http://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/influenza/influenza-surveillance>, ⁵ <https://ccdphcd.shinyapps.io/influenza/>;

⁶ https://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdph/supp_info/health-protection/current_flu_situationinchicago2011.html;

⁷ www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/publications/20190916idphohp-annual-flu-testing.pdf ;

⁸ <https://www.chicagohan.org/documents/14171/39923/Reporting+Influenza-Associated+ICU+Hospitalizations/bc2f49b2-cf74-487c-9441-0b0a930e4b41>; ⁹ <httpsdph.partner.illinois.gov/>