

Influenza (Flu) Surveillance Summary

Influenza (Flu) Surveillance in Indiana

State health officials say they will be providing a weekly update on influenza (flu) activity in Indiana each Wednesday, starting September 23, 2009. This update will include general information on flu activity, based on surveillance across the state, but will NOT include flu case counts on either the state or the county level. A summary of influenza surveillance in Indiana will be posted on this site every Wednesday.

The Indiana State Health Department will be monitoring all influenza activity in the state, both seasonal influenza and the 2009 H1N1 influenza A through the use of influenza sentinel surveillance and the Public Health Emergency Syndromic System (PHESS). Through this system, data is collected from hospital emergency departments on a daily basis and analyzed by the State Health Department's epidemiologists. State health officials will also be tracking hospitalizations from influenza-like illnesses and pneumonia and flu-related deaths and reporting that information on a statewide level.

Indiana has 58 influenza sentinel sites distributed around the state in outpatient settings. When individuals seek medical care for influenza-like illness at the sentinel sites, the practitioner performs a nasal swab and sends it to the state laboratory. The state laboratory tests the swab for influenza A and if it is positive, the laboratory does further testing to determine the subtype of influenza. This allows state health officials to determine what types of influenza viruses are circulating.

During the spring of 2009, as the novel H1N1 influenza was beginning to spread across the United States, Indiana confirmed its first case after a patient was seen with influenza-like illness at a flu sentinel site and had routine testing as part of this surveillance system. Since the pandemic was declared in June 2009, the State Health Department has increased the number of sentinel sites across the state to improve surveillance.

Week 37 (September 13-19, 2009) Summary

- Based on data from emergency rooms and flu sentinel sites, there is more influenza-like illness being reported than at the same time over the past two years;
- Universities are experiencing high levels of influenza-like illness, which may be leading to perception of an increase of influenza-like illness in the entire community;
- No influenza-associated deaths were reported to the Indiana State Department of Health during week 37. (In 2009, there have been four deaths associated with the 2009 H1N1 Influenza A.);
- Influenza-like illness does not appear to be affecting absentee rates for health care personnel at this time;
- Since September 1, 2009, of the specimens testing positive for influenza, 89 percent were 2009 H1N1 flu.