Summary: As of 3/21/2015, 1919 cases of confirmed influenza were reported to the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), with 479 (25.0%) cases requiring hospitalization. Seventeen influenza-associated deaths have been reported. Emergency department visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) comprised 1.34% of all ED visits this week.

Although influenza activity is declining, the proportion of influenza B isolates has been steadily increasing over the past several weeks. BPHC reminds everyone who has not received the influenza vaccine that it is not too late to be vaccinated.

Cases of influenza diagnosed in Boston and confirmed by any laboratory test must be reported to BPHC.

CDC Health Update Regarding Treatment of Patients with Influenza with Antiviral Medications

This CDC Health Update was issued on 1/9/2015:
1) to remind clinicians that influenza should be high on their list of possible diagnoses for ill patients, because influenza activity is elevated nationwide, and
2) to advise clinicians that all hospitalized patients and all high-risk patients (hospitalized or outpatient) with suspected influenza should be treated as soon as possible with an influenza antiviral medication. Clinicians should not wait for confirmatory influenza testing. Antivirals work best when given early, but therapeutic benefit has been observed even when treatment is initiated later.
Race/Ethnicity of Confirmed Influenza Cases, 10/1/2014 - 3/21/2015, Boston Residents

- Asian: 7%
- Black / African American: 29%
- Latino / Hispanic: 13%
- White: 33%
- Unknown: 13%
- Other: 5%

Age Distribution of Confirmed Influenza Cases, 10/1/2014 - 3/21/2015, Boston Residents

- 65+ yrs: 28%
- 18-44 yrs: 33%
- 5-17 yrs: 9%
- <5 yrs: 8%
- 45-64 yrs: 22%
- 5-17 yrs: 9%
- <5 yrs: 8%
- 45-64 yrs: 22%

Weekly Percentage of ED Visits for ILI, 2012-2015

- 2012-2013
- 2013-2014
- 2014-2015

Weekly Percentage of ED Visits for ILI by Age Group, 10/1/14 - 3/21/15

0-4, 5-17, 18-44, 45-64, >64

Cases of influenza diagnosed in Boston and confirmed by any laboratory test must be reported to BPHC. Influenza like illness (ILI) is defined as "flu" OR "fever and a cough or sore throat" in the ED chief complaint as captured by the BPHC Syndromic Surveillance System.
Geographic Distribution

Rate of Confirmed Influenza Cases by Neighborhood per 100,000 Population
October 1, 2014 - March 21, 2015

Rate of ILI Syndrome ED Visits by Neighborhood per 100,000 Population
October 1, 2014 - March 21, 2015

Neighborhood Legend
A/B=Allston/Brighton
BB=Back Bay
CH=Charlestown
EB=East Boston
FW=Fenway
HP=Hyde Park
JP=Jamaica Plain
MT=Mattapan
ND=North Dorchester
RS=Roslindale
RX=Roxbury
SB=South Boston
SD=South Dorchester
SE=South End
WR=West Roxbury