Summary: As of 3/5/2016, 491 cases of laboratory-confirmed influenza were reported to the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) since 10/1/2015, with eighty-seven (18%) cases requiring hospitalization. One influenza-associated death has been reported. Emergency department visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) comprised 1.35% of all ED visits this week.

Influenza activity in Boston continues to increase. BPHC reminds everyone that the influenza vaccine remains the best available tool for preventing illness.

Cases of influenza diagnosed in Boston and confirmed by any laboratory test must be reported to BPHC by calling (617) 534-5611

The CDC has received reports of severe illness in some influenza cases. H1N1 viruses have predominated nationally in recent weeks, although H3N2 and influenza B viruses continue to co-circulate. The CDC is encouraging early treatment of those with influenza symptoms, especially hospitalized patients and patients with severe illness. Early antiviral treatment can reduce morbidity and mortality. For additional information and guidance, please click the following link:

http://emergency.cdc.gov/han/han00387.asp
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.
Comparison of ILI Using Flu Near You (FNY)* ILI Data and ED Visits for ILI, 2013-2016

*Flu Near You (FNY) compiles weekly data of ILI activity in the United States. The data come from short, weekly internet-based surveys completed by voluntary participants who indicate whether they are healthy or have experienced any of a short list of symptoms.

The public may participate by enrolling in FNY at: https://flunearyou.org/