



BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION (BPHC)

Communicable Disease Control Division
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Boston Influenza Report - For the Week Ending 1/5/2019 (MMWR Week 1)

9/30/2018-1/5/2019 (MMWR Week 1)

Reported Cases (Boston Residents)	# (% of total)
Influenza A	521 (95%)
Influenza B	30 (5%)
Influenza A and B	0
Influenza (type unspecified)	0
TOTAL (season-to-date)	551

Boston ED ILI Surveillance*	
This Week ILI% (Week 1)	2.51%
Last Week ILI% (Week 52)	1.89%
State/National ILI Surveillance**	
This Week Massachusetts ILI% (Week 1)	3.37%
This Week National ILI% (Week 1)	3.54%

Summary: As of 1/5/2019, 551 total cases of laboratory-confirmed influenza in Boston residents have been reported to the BPHC since 9/30/2018. One influenza-associated death in a Boston resident has been reported in an elderly individual with multiple medical conditions. Influenza-like illness (ILI) comprised 2.51% of all ED visits this week. Geographic distribution of flu activity in MA continues to be widespread. Intensity of ILI in the Commonwealth remains high.

From 9/30/2018-1/5/2019, 73.5% of influenza specimens tested by CDC were positive for H1N1. Of the remaining, 16.8% were H3N2, 3.2% were type B, and 6.5% were not fully characterized. H1N1 viruses are associated with increased flu activity in persons ≤17 years of age.

Flu season often does not peak until February.

Vaccination reduces the number of flu illnesses, healthcare visits, flu-related hospitalizations, and missed work and school.

Providers should continue to offer vaccine, particularly to children, through the remainder of the season.

Vaccinated persons who do develop the flu tend to have less severe illness and are less likely to spread illness to others including those unable to receive vaccine. Flu vaccine has been shown to be life-saving in children. 80% of pediatric flu deaths occur in unvaccinated children.

SEASON TO DATE HOSPITALIZATION (THROUGH MMWR WEEK 1)			
SEASON	# CASES	# HOSPITALIZED	% HOSPITALIZED***
2018-2019	551	95	17
2017-2018	371	92	25

Cases of influenza diagnosed in Boston and confirmed by any laboratory test must be reported to BPHC by calling (617) 534-5611 or faxing to (617) 534-5905.

*Influenza-like illness (ILI) is defined as "flu" OR "fever AND (cough OR sore throat)" in ED chief complaint data captured by BPHC Syndromic Surveillance System.
 **Massachusetts and National ILI data are calculated using ILInet outpatient surveillance data from sentinel sites. The City of Boston uses different methodology derived from the BPHC Syndromic Surveillance System. For more information on ILInet go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/overview.htm>.
 ***% Hospitalized=proportion of all confirmed influenza cases who were hospitalized.

Figure 1. Weekly Reported Influenza Cases (in Boston Residents) and % ILI ED Visits, 2018-2019 Season

