Summary: As of 1/19/2019, 937 total cases of laboratory-confirmed influenza in Boston residents have been reported to the BPHC since 9/30/2018. Two influenza-associated deaths in Boston residents have been reported in individuals with multiple medical conditions. Influenza-like illness (ILI) comprised 2.47% 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 9/30/2018-1/19/2019, 76.0% of influenza specimens tested by CDC were positive for H1N1. Of the remaining, 16.8% were H3N2, 4.2% were A (untyped), and 3.0% were type B. 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 develop flu tend to have milder illness and are less likely to spread flu 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.