**BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION (BPHC)**

Communicable Disease Control Division

1010 Massachusetts Ave - Boston, MA 02118

Phone: (617) 534-5611 - Fax: (617) 534-5905

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**Boston Influenza Report - For the Week Ending 3/2/2019 (MMWR Week 9)**

**Reported Cases (Boston Residents) # (% of total)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influenza (type unspecified)</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influenza A and B</td>
<td>6 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influenza B</td>
<td>72 (3.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influenza A</td>
<td>2232 (96.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL (season-to-date)**: 2310

**State/National ILI Surveillance**

This Week Massachusetts ILI% (Week 9): 2.53%

This Week National ILI% (Week 9): 4.70%

**Boston ED ILI Surveillance**

This Week ILI% (Week 9): 2.03%

**Last Week ILI% (Week 8): 2.43%**

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**Summary**:

As of 3/2/2019, 2,310 total cases of laboratory-confirmed influenza in Boston residents have been reported to BPHC since 9/30/2018. Through death certificate review and voluntary reporting by healthcare facilities, BPHC tracks influenza-related deaths among Boston residents. Since the beginning of the season, four influenza-associated deaths in Boston residents have been reported. All four were older adults with multiple medical conditions. Nationally and statewide, only pediatric flu-related deaths are reportable. To date, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has reported three influenza-related pediatric deaths, compared to one during the 2017-2018 season; none were residents of Boston. Nationally, 64 influenza-related pediatric deaths have been reported to date. During the 2017-18 season, a total of 165 influenza-related pediatric deaths were reported. Influenza-like illness (ILI) comprised 2.03% of all ED visits this week, a decrease from the previous week. Geographic distribution of flu activity in MA continues to be widespread. Intensity of ILI in the Commonwealth has been downgraded to moderate.

From 9/30/2018-3/2/2019, 64.8% of influenza specimens tested by public health laboratories were positive for A(H1N1). Of the remaining, 28.2% were A(H3N2), 4.7% were A (untyped), and 2.3% were type B. A(H1N1) viruses are associated with increased flu activity in persons ≤17 years of age. The circulating influenza viruses, including A(H1N1) viruses, are well matched to the 2018-2019 seasonal vaccine.

CDC released interim vaccine effectiveness (VE) estimates. The overall VE is 47% (95% CI: 34%-57%). This is consistent with what has been seen (40%-60%) in recent seasons when vaccine is well-matched to circulating strains. Estimates of VE vary by age. The highest overall VE (61%) was noted in children 6 months of age to 17 years of age. These estimates are interim and subject to change. For more information go to: [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/pdfs/mm6806-H.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/pdfs/mm6806-H.pdf)

Vaccination with influenza vaccine is the best way to prevent influenza. 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.

There are currently no reported shortages of the vaccine. Information on vaccination sites is available at [https://vaccinefinder.org/](https://vaccinefinder.org/). Pharmacies also offer vaccine; however, children under the age of 9 must receive vaccine. Information on vaccination sites is available at [https://vaccinefinder.org/](https://vaccinefinder.org/). Providers should continue to offer vaccine, particularly to children, through the remainder of the season.

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**SEASON TO DATE HOSPITALIZATION (THROUGH MMWR WEEK 9)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEASON</th>
<th># CASES</th>
<th># HOSPITALIZED</th>
<th>% HOSPITALIZED***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018-2019</td>
<td>2310</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-2018</td>
<td>3331</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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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.
Weekly ILI ED visits are shown from the 2016-2017 season to present. For the week ending 3/2/2019, ILI accounted for 2.03% of ED visits, a decrease of 0.40% from the prior week.

Race/Ethnicity and Age Distribution Through Week Ending 3/2/2019

Black and Latino Boston residents, who account for 42% of all Boston residents, continue to be disproportionately impacted by influenza, representing a total of 58% of all confirmed cases reported to BPHC.

Figure 2. Weekly % ILI Boston ED Visits, 2016-2019

Figure 3. Reported Influenza Cases by Race/Ethnicity in Boston Residents Compared to the Overall Boston Population*

N=2310

Figure 4. Reported Influenza Cases by Age Group in Boston Residents Compared to the Overall Boston Population*

N=2310

*Boston Population, 2010 Census Data
**Other is inclusive of American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and unspecified “other” race

N=2310

*Boston Population, 2010 Census Data

N=2310

N=2310

N=2310
For the 2018-19 season through MMWR week 9, adults 65 years of age and older accounted for 14% of confirmed influenza cases compared to 20% for the 2017-18 season through MMWR week 9. This is likely related to the current predominant circulation of H1N1 viruses in contrast to the predominance of H3N2 viruses during the 2017-18 season.

Influenza disproportionately impacts Black and Latino residents as seen in Figure 3. For the 2018-19 season through MMWR week 9, Black and Latino residents comprise 58% of all cases, compared to 51% of cases during the previous 2017-18 season through MMWR week 9.
**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/](https://flunearyou.org/)

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**Figure 7a.** Rate of Confirmed Influenza Cases by Neighborhood per 100,000 Population September 30, 2018 - March 2, 2019

**Figure 7b.** Rate of ILI Syndrome ED Visits by Neighborhood per 100,000 Population September 30, 2018 - March 2, 2019

**Figure 8.** Comparison of Flu Near You (FNY)* ILI Data and ED Visits for ILI, 2016-2019

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