Summary: As of 3/14/2020, a total of 4,960 cases of laboratory-confirmed influenza in Boston residents have been reported to the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) since 9/29/2019. Four hundred and forty (9%) have been hospitalized. Since the beginning of the season, three influenza-associated deaths in older Boston residents with multiple medical conditions have been reported. Nationally and statewide, only pediatric flu-related deaths are reportable. No flu-related pediatric deaths have been identified in Boston residents. Emergency Department (ED) visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) comprised 4.12% of all ED visits this week, an increase of 0.68% from the prior week. While %ILI increased, the number of lab-confirmed cases decreased. This may be an indication of an increase in persons seeking assessments and testing for COVID-19 who perhaps would not have otherwise sought healthcare. Geographic distribution of influenza activity in Massachusetts is widespread. Intensity of ILI in the State is high.

Providers should continue to offer vaccine to all persons ≥6 months of age until May.

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

*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 CDC employ a different methodology than the City of Boston to calculate %ILI. Both Massachusetts and National ILI data are calculated using ILInet outpatient surveillance data from sentinel sites. For more information Click Here.

*State & national ILI data obtained from CDC’s FluView Report. Click Here for FluView.

For the week ending 3/14/2020, ILI accounted for 4.12% of ED visits, an increase of 0.68% from the prior week.
Weekly ILI ED visits are shown from the 2017-2018 season to present. For the week ending 3/14/2020, ILI accounted for 4.12% of ED visits, an increase of 0.68% from the prior week.