



Office of Public Health

System-Wide Notice

H1N1 Update, Tuesday, October 20, 2009

H1N1 continues to cause a large number of cases of influenza in the United States and world-wide.

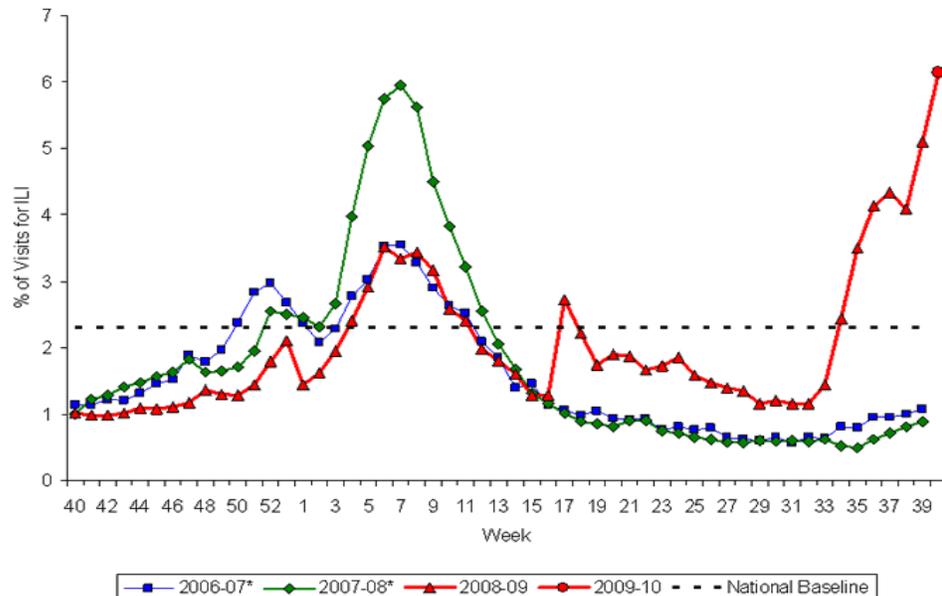
For the most up to date and authoritative information see the CDC flu site at: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
For NPS specific information go to: <http://inside.nps.gov/waso/waso.cfm?prg=122&lv=2>

Key points:

- US influenza cases are unusually high for this early in the flu season (CDC graph below)
- While most seasonal flu virus strains are more likely to affect cells higher in the respiratory tract, H1N1 appears to infect cells deep in the lungs. This could lead to a larger than usual number of cases of viral pneumonia, a potentially severe outcome.
- However, at this point, according to the World Health Organization, the majority of cases continue to be uncomplicated with full recovery within a week, even without medical treatment
- H1N1 continues to disproportionately affect the young.
- Vaccine is being delivered nation-wide but production and delivery of vaccine may be slower than earlier anticipated.

Percentage of Visits for Influenza-like Illness (ILI) Reported by the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet), National Summary 2008-2009 and Previous Two Seasons

(Posted October 16, 2009, 7:30 PM ET, for Week Ending October 10, 2009)



*There was no week 53 during the 2006-07 or 2007-08 influenza seasons, therefore the week 53 data point for those seasons is an average of weeks 52 and 1.

Director
202-513-7217

Assistant to the
Director for Science
202-513-7097

Chief
Epidemiology Branch
505-248-7806

Chief
Field Services Branch
402-661-1718

Chief
Commissioned Corps
Operations Branch
202-513-7215

The following remarks are by Dr. Anne Schuchat, CDC and are from a press briefing on October 16, 2009. These remarks have been edited for brevity by the NPS OPH.

“It's unprecedented for this time of year to have the whole country seeing such high levels of activity. The national average is about 6.1% of doctors visits, for purposes of influenza-like illness that's very high at any time particularly in October. And for the first week this fall, we're seeing that the amount of influenza and pneumonia mortality is above the epidemic threshold. All of these things may suggest it's a very busy and difficult flu season and we are seeing very high levels of activity around the country. We are also having updates on the pediatric deaths. Unfortunately those are going up as well. There are now a total of 86 children under 18 who died from this H1N1 influenza virus, the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus.”

“We hope that the continuing deaths in children will be as few as possible but this is a very brisk number, usually in a whole season that lasts from going to September all the way to may, you would only have about 40 or 50 deaths so in just one month's time we've had that many.”

“... some of the manufacturers have let us know that the production of vaccine is likely to be a bit delayed in terms of the number of doses they were expecting to have out in future weeks. ... we do still expect to have a large number of doses that we've been talking about so that eventually anyone who wants be to be vaccinated will be able to be vaccinated but the next couple of weeks will continue to be a slow start.”