February 25, 2009: Vol. 3, Issue 18 Surveillance Period (week 7): 02/15/09—02/21/09

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES Public Health

INFLUENZA WATCH
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Los Angeles County

Respiratory activity and positive influenza tests remained at a moderate level during week 7; influenza A is predominant throughout Los Angeles County. Emergency Department ILI (influenza-like illness) activity remains relatively constant but slightly lower than rates experienced during the 2007-08 season. Laboratory confirmed cases of RSV continue to decline in Los Angeles County for the 4th straight week.

Table 1: Surveillance System Overview

SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM*	Week 7	2008-2009 YTD
Percent Positive Influenza Tests±	9.2	4.0
Percent Positive RSV Tests‡	21.1	19.0
Percent Flu A / Flu B±	- -	92% / 8%
Severe Pediatric Influenza Cases†	0	1
Respiratory Outbreaks	0	6
Influenza Vaccines Administered (PH)	- -	59,735

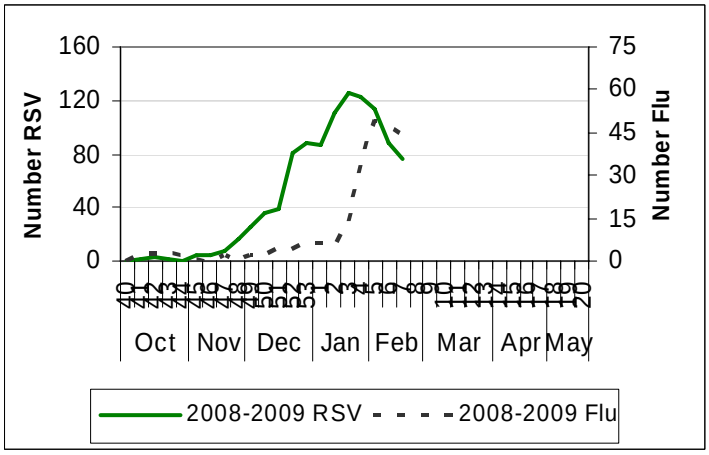
*See http://lapublichealth.org/acd/flu.htm for a description of surveillance methods.

± Sentinel sites (8 participating facilities).

‡ Sentinel sites (4participating facilities).

†The number of deaths is indicated by the parenthesis.

Figure 1: Positive Influenza and RSV Tests by Week



RSV data in Figure 1 represent testing completed in four reporting facilities for the 2008-2009 season. Influenza data represent testing completed in eight facilities.

California

During week 6 (February 8-February 14), influenza activity in California remained **regional** based on data from Northern and Southern California. Antiviral prescriptions have steadily increased in both regions.

http://www.cdph.ca.gov/PROGRAMS/VRDL/Pages/CaliforniaInfluenzaSurveillanceProject.aspx

United States

Influenza activity increased during week 6. During this week, 24 states reported **widespread** activity, 13 states reported **regional** activity, 11 reported **local** activity, and 2 reported **sporadic** activity. Influenza activity is lower compared to the same week last year. http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivity.htm

In the News First Step Toward Lifelong Flu Vaccine?

Researchers have discovered an "Achilles heel" shared by influenza virus strains. The flu virus is cloaked by lollipop shaped proteins known as hemagglutinins. Currently, influenza vaccines are targeted to the circular top which constantly mutates, resulting in the need to develop new vaccines every year. However researchers have discovered that the stem or stick is a highly conserved region. This region is also what gives the virus the ability to attack cells. Scientists have recently identified antibodies that attack the more stable portion of the hemagglutinin. This discovery might be the first step in developing a vaccine that could be provide lifelong immunity to influenza viruses.
http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/02/24/earlyshow/health/main4823831.shtml and http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0003942

Note: Because of a recently discovered inconsistency in reporting of positive influenza tests, we have temporarily suspended the contribution of one reporting source. Thus, Table 1 and Figure 1(specifically, the % positive and the total # positive flu tests) will not be directly comparable to past tables and graphs.

Figure 2: Percent of ED Visits for ILI by Week