

INFLUENZA SEASON DEFINITION

Influenza is monitored for 32 weeks, beginning in October and ending mid-May of the following year. The weeks are numbered according to the calendar year, with week 1 corresponding to the first week in January. Thus the influenza season begins during week 40 (October), continues through the end of the year (week 52), and ends during week 20 (May) of the following year.

DESCRIPTION OF INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

I. SENTINEL CASE SURVEILLANCE

1. Influenza and RSV Tests

Sentinel laboratories serving Los Angeles County healthcare providers and institutions report the number of positive tests indicating influenza or respiratory syncytial virus on a weekly basis. Selected samples from positive cases are sent to the LAC DPH laboratory for further testing and analysis.

2. Hospitalized Influenza Cases

In a pilot study beginning this 2006-2007 season, five hospitals in Los Angeles County will report all influenza cases. The cases definition is as follows: hospitalization or death and a positive laboratory test for influenza.

3. Severe Pediatric Influenza

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LAC DPH) participates in the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) surveillance for severe pediatric influenza cases. The case definition is as follows: age 0- 17 years; a clinical syndrome consistent with influenza or complications of influenza; confirmation by laboratory testing; and hospitalization in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) or death (with no period of complete recovery between the illness and death). After a case has been reported, ACDC attempts to confirm the diagnosis with specialized testing in the LAC DPH Laboratory.

4. University Project

Participating university student health centers in Los Angeles County receive influenza test supplies to perform nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs on students presenting with a respiratory illness meeting the case definition: a student ≥ 18 years at a participating university with fever $>100.1^{\circ}$ F at time of visit or self reported fever prior to arrival, onset of illness < 4 days before the office visit, at least one other respiratory symptom (e.g., cough), and willingness to provide informed consent. Participating sites identify students meeting the case definition one day each week. Basic demographic information is collected and the NP swabs are sent to the LAC DPH Laboratory for testing. For a complete description, see: http://lapublichealth.org/acd/reports/annual/Special_Report_2003.pdf

II. SYNDROMIC SURVEILLANCE

1. **Emergency Department Visits for Influenza-Like Illness: All Ages and Children < 6 Years**

The LAC DPH's Syndromic Surveillance Project monitors initial self-reported symptoms from patients presenting to participating emergency departments throughout Los Angeles County. These symptoms are categorized into different clinical syndromes according to specific code words. The syndrome of influenza-like illness includes symptoms such as: fever, congestion, sneezing, sore throat, runny nose, and cough. The proportion of ILI emergency department visits for all ages and for children < 6 years of age is analyzed weekly.

2. **Influenza-Like Illness in Los Angeles County Schools**

Beginning this 2006-2007 season, participating nurses will be reporting the percentage of students who visit the school nurse with influenza-like illness on a weekly basis. Influenza-like illness (ILI) is defined as fever $\geq 100^{\circ}$ F in addition to cough and/or sore throat. Of 1700 Los Angeles County schools, 24 are participating in this pilot study; one third are high schools, one third are middle schools, and one third are elementary schools.

III. OTHER SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS

1. **National Retail Data Monitor (NRDM)**

The LAC DPH's Syndromic Surveillance Project receives selected types of over-the-counter medication and thermometer sales daily through the National Retail Data Monitor surveillance system. The number of thermometer sales is analyzed on a weekly basis as part of our influenza surveillance system.

2. **Influenza Vaccinations**

Publicly funded influenza vaccine from the California Department of Health Services and vaccine purchased by Los Angeles County are distributed by the LAC DPH's Immunization Program to public clinics, community and free clinics, and private providers who agree to hold public clinics. Accountability forms for every dose administered are tracked. Publicly funded vaccine accounts for less than 10% of influenza vaccine distributed in Los Angeles County. For more information, visit: <http://lapublichealth.org/ip/index.htm>.