

INFLUENZA WATCH

Influenza and Related Disease Updates for Los Angeles County

January 31, 2014

Surveillance Week 4

Ending 1/25/14

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Influenza Activity Still Up But Leveling Off

Influenza activity in Los Angeles County (LAC) remains at a high level however over the past few weeks various indicators show activity may be plateauing. Visits to participating emergency departments for influenza-like illness leveled out as well as reports of percent positive flu tests from sentinel labs (Figures 1 & 2). Flu will continue to circulate for the next few months therefore vaccination is still beneficial particularly for those who are at high risk for complications; those who are overweight or obese, pregnant women, and those who are immunocompromised or have underlying medical conditions. In addition, family members and anyone who comes into close proximity with high risk individuals should be vaccinated to achieve cocooning immunization and avoid spreading flu to those who may be at risk for serious complications that could result in hospitalization or even death.

Table 1. LA County Surveillance Summary 2013-2014

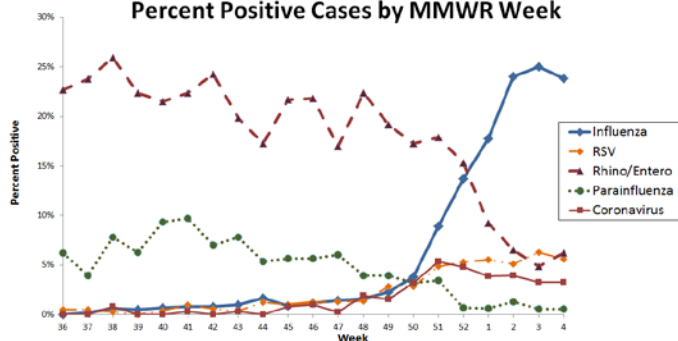
LA County Surveillance Summary	Week 4 1/19/14-1/25/14	2013-14 YTD (9/1/13-Present)
Positive Flu Tests/Total Tests [†] (Percent Positive Flu Tests)	681/2853 (23.9%)	2451/20098 (12.2%)
Percent Flu A/B	97/3	98/2
Community Respiratory Outbreaks	0	4
Adult Flu Deaths, Confirmed ^{††}	12	31
Pediatric Flu Deaths	0	2
Total	12	33

[†]Sentinel sites (9 participating)

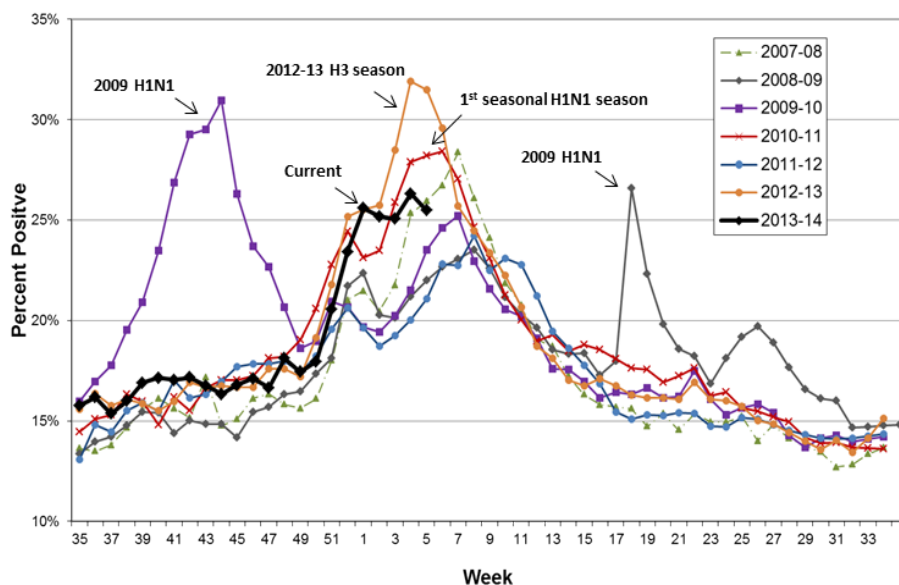
^{††}Confirmed influenza death is defined by a positive lab test, compatible symptoms, and clear progression from illness to death

Note: LA County tracks flu deaths of all ages, CA State reports on those <65 years only

**Figure 1. Respiratory Viruses, LA County 2013-2014
Percent Positive Cases by MMWR Week**



**Figure 2. Percent Positive Influenza Like Illness in participating LAC
Emergency Departments**



Obesity as a risk factor

During the H1N1 pandemic in 2009 obesity was identified as a stand-alone risk factor for influenza-associated death. In LAC being obese or even overweight has been a top risk factor for serious complications from the flu. Currently, the county has been receiving reports of hospitalizations and even death in obese and overweight adults with no additional health conditions. Nationwide CDC reports that this season nearly half of all adult hospitalizations involve those who are obese.

For more information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/news/flu-severity-rises.htm>