



# INFLUENZA WATCH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

**Los Angeles County (LAC)** The total number of positive flu tests decreased in week 45, however, the percent of flu tests that tested positive increased (Figure 1). Parainfluenza 1 and rhinovirus have also been identified in LAC (see In The News). Twenty-five new ILI (influenza-like illness) outbreaks (17 in elementary schools, 7 in other schools, and 1 in a skilled nursing facility) were reported during week 45. The percent of emergency department visits due to ILI noticeably decreased but still is substantially higher relative to the same time in previous years (Figure 2). Since the beginning of the pandemic in April there have been a total of 178 ICU admissions and 86 deaths due to laboratory confirmed H1N1; since the beginning of the 2009-2010 flu season on August 30, there have been 34 deaths due to laboratory confirmed influenza of any type.

**Table 1: Surveillance System Overview**

SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM*	Week 45	2009-2010 YTD
Percent Positive Influenza Tests <sup>±</sup>	21.9	19.6
Percent Positive RSV Tests <sup>‡</sup>	1.9	0.4
Percent Flu A / Flu B <sup>±</sup>	99.2 / 0.8	99.7 / 0.3
Severe Pediatric Influenza Cases <sup>†</sup>	4 (0)	76 (7)
Respiratory Outbreaks	25	315
Influenza Deaths	1	34

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

± Sentinel sites (7 participating facilities in week 45)

‡ Sentinel sites (3 participating facilities in week 45)

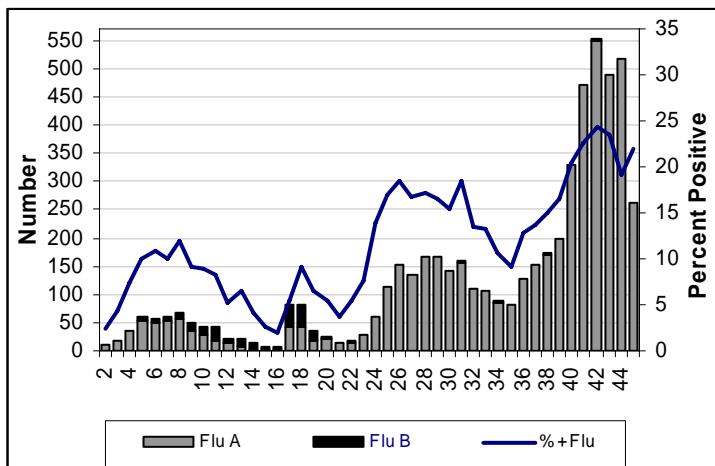
†The number of deaths is indicated by the parenthesis.

**California** During week 45 (November 8-November 14), influenza activity in California remained **widespread**.

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

**United States** Influenza activity decreased in the US during week 44 (November 1-November 7). In week 44, 46 states reported widespread activity and 4 states reported regional activity. All subtyped influenza A viruses reported to CDC in week 44 were novel influenza A (H1N1) viruses. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

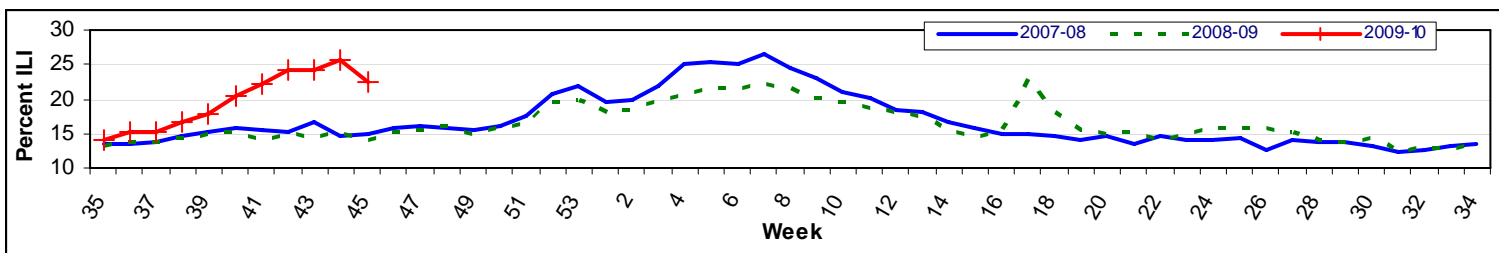
**Figure 1: Total Positive Flu and % Positive Flu by Week**



\*Influenza data represent testing completed in 9 facilities except in weeks 44 (8 facilities) and 45 (7 facilities).

**In the News** As discussed in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* on November 12, many people who became sick with influenza-like illness (ILI) this fall and presented to the Children’s Hospital of Pennsylvania (CHOP) were actually infected with an unusually severe strain of rhinovirus rather than with pandemic H1N1. Symptoms included wheezing, pneumonia, fever, and lower respiratory tract infections. Lab data from the hospital showed record numbers of specimens testing positive for rhinovirus in September. These numbers continued to rise sharply through October. While CHOP had some H1N1 cases at this time, the hospital did not experience a marked increase in cases until the third week of October. These findings suggest that many people who believe that they had H1N1 may have instead been victims of rhinovirus. This should cause people who believe they contracted H1N1 and thus acquired immunity to rethink any decision to forego the H1N1 vaccine. [http://www.philly.com/inquirer/health\\_sciencedaily/](http://www.philly.com/inquirer/health_sciencedaily/)

**Figure 2: Percent of Emergency Department Visits for Influenza-Like Illness by Week, All Ages**





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## Analysis of Influenza Cases in Los Angeles County (LAC)

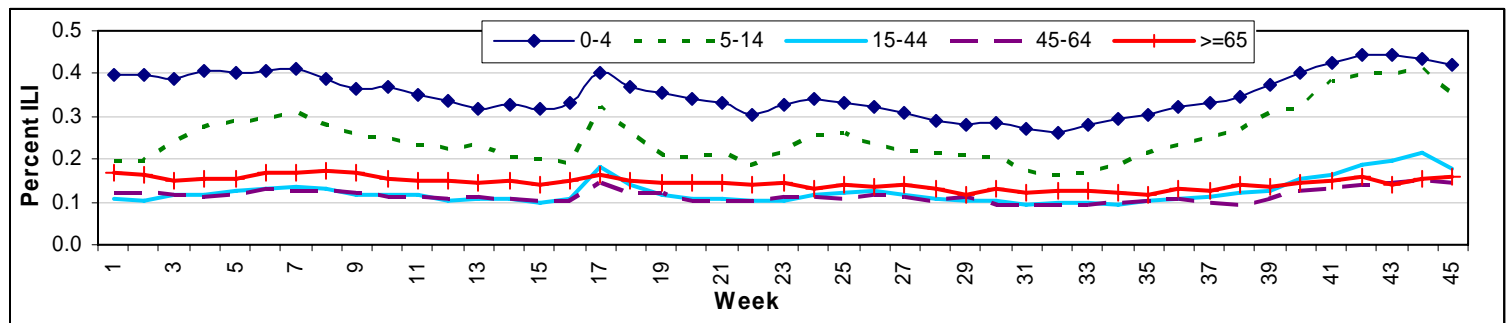
The percent of emergency department visits for Influenza-like illness has decreased most noticeably among those aged 5-14 years as well as those aged 15-44 years. A smaller decrease was seen among those aged 0-4 years. In contrast, the percent of ED visits for ILII among those aged 65 years or older has increased slightly in the past couple weeks but has remained relatively stable throughout the year (Figure 3).

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health continues to receive many reports of ICU admission/deaths due to H1N1. While the number of ICU/deaths seems to have peaked during week 43 (Figure 4), the numbers for weeks 44 and 45 may increase as there is often some delay in reporting.

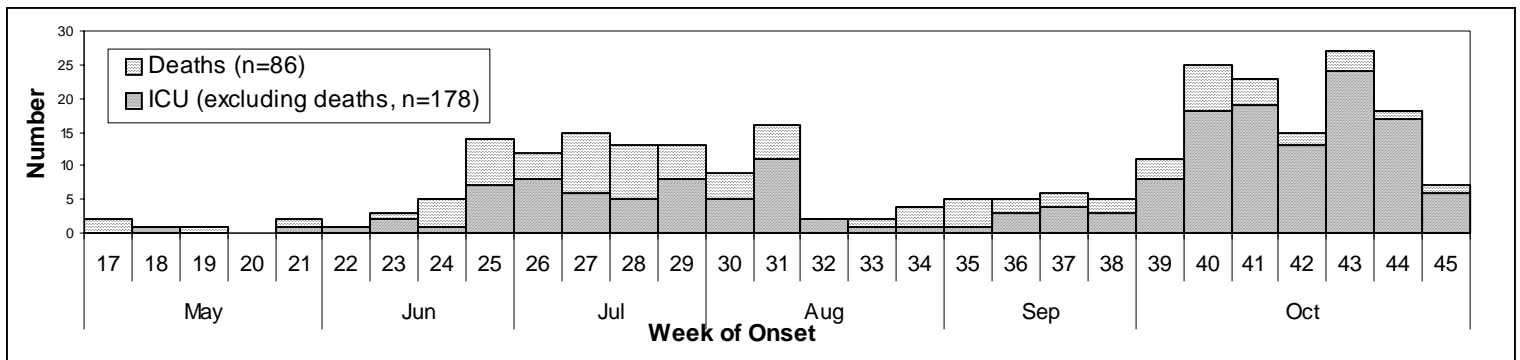
The number of hospitalizations due to any influenza as well as the rate (per 1,000 hospital beds) of laboratory-confirmed influenza decreased in week 45 (Figure 5).

Since the beginning of the pandemic in April, 2009 there have been 264 ICU/deaths due to confirmed pandemic influenza A type H1N1. Of these cases 86 have been deaths. Overall, while much remains unknown, markers of influenza activity indicate that the H1N1 pandemic has leveled off in Los Angeles County for now. However, influenza activity remains at unprecedented levels.

**Figure 3: Percent of Emergency Department Visits for Influenza-Like Illness by Week by Age Group**



**Figure 4: Number of Pandemic H1N1 by Week of Onset as of November 19, 2009, Individual Case Reporting**



**Figure 5: Number and Rate of Hospitalized Influenza (Any Influenza) Cases, Aggregate Reporting**

