State influenza and influenza-like illness (ILI) activity:
- Florida reported local activity to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in week 16.
- In week 16, influenza activity in Florida decreased. Statewide, influenza activity this season peaked in week 8 (late February). Influenza activity in South Florida peaked earlier than the rest of the state in week 52 (late December).
- Statewide, the percent of emergency department (ED) and urgent care center (UCC) visits for ILI decreased and was similar to levels observed in previous seasons at this time.
- Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity in children <5 years old decreased but remained above levels observed in previous seasons at this time.
- In week 15, the preliminary estimated number of deaths due to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) decreased and was similar to levels seen in previous seasons at this time.
- In week 16, one influenza-associated pediatric death was reported.
  - Nine influenza-associated pediatric deaths have been reported so far this season in Florida. While rare, Florida receives reports of influenza-associated pediatric deaths each season.
  - Eight counties reported moderate influenza activity, 53 counties reported mild influenza activity, and six counties reported no influenza activity.
  - Two influenza or ILI outbreaks were reported. A total of 145 outbreaks of influenza or ILI have been reported so far this season.
- Since the start of the 2016-17 influenza season, the most common influenza subtype detected at the Bureau of Public Health Laboratories (BPHL) statewide has been influenza A (H3). In recent weeks, the percent of specimens testing positive for influenza B increased. This trend has also been observed nationally. This late-season circulation of influenza B is expected.

National influenza activity:
- In recent weeks, influenza and ILI activity decreased dramatically overall. According to the most recent FluView, ILI activity decreased and was below the national baseline. The majority of states reported local activity.
- In recent weeks, influenza B viruses have been the most frequently identified virus type by public health laboratories across the nation.
- Avian influenza A (H7N9) was recently identified in chickens in Tennessee, Alabama, and Kentucky. Avian influenza A (H7) was also recently identified in chickens in Georgia.
  - These strains of H7N9 are not the same as the strain circulating in China.
  - These are the first identifications of H7N9 in domestic poultry in the U.S. in 2017.
- Avian influenza A (H5N2) was also recently identified in turkeys in Wisconsin.
  - This is the first identification of H5N2 in domestic poultry in the U.S. in 2017.
- No avian influenza has been identified in Florida birds or humans so far in 2017.
  - To learn more about HPAI, please visit: www.floridahealth.gov/novelflu.
Influenza surveillance goals:

- Influenza surveillance is conducted to detect changes in the influenza virus. These data are used to help determine the annual national vaccine composition and to prepare for potential epidemics or pandemics.
- Surveillance is also conducted to identify unusually severe presentations of influenza infection, detect outbreaks, and determine seasonal influenza trends in order to guide influenza prevention, particularly in high-risk populations like children, adults ≥65 years old, and pregnant women.

Note: Surveillance case definitions for influenza-like illness (ILI) vary across surveillance systems. For more information on influenza surveillance systems and associated case definitions used in Florida, see page 14.

Statewide ILI Visits

**Figure 1** shows the percent of visits for ILI from ED and UCC chief complaint data for ESSENCE-FL participating facilities (n=295), week 40, 2013 to week 16, 2017. In week 16, the percent of visits to EDs and UCCs for ILI decreased and was similar to levels seen in previous seasons at this time.

The ESSENCE-FL ILI syndrome is composed of chief complaints that include the words “influenza” or “flu,” or chief complaints that include the words “fever” and “cough,” or “fever” and “sore throat.” For more information on ESSENCE-FL, see page 10.
Statewide ILI Outpatient Visits and P&I Deaths

Visits for ILI to Outpatient Providers by Flu Season
ILI = influenza-like illness

Figure 2 shows the percent of visits for ILI reported by ILINet outpatient providers statewide (n=42), week 40, 2013 to week 16, 2017. For ILINet, influenza-like illness (ILI) is defined as a fever ≥100°F AND sore throat and/or cough in the absence of another known cause.

In week 16, the percent of visits for ILI reported by ILINet outpatient providers decreased and was similar to levels seen in previous seasons at this time.

P&I Deaths* from Vital Statistics by Flu Season
P&I = pneumonia and influenza

Figure 3 shows P&I deaths* for all Florida counties from the Bureau of Vital Statistics, as reported into ESSENCE-FL, week 40, 2013 to week 15,2017.

As of week 15 (ending April 15, 2017), 6,877 P&I deaths have been reported in the 2016-17 influenza season.

The preliminary number of P&I deaths decreased and was similar to levels seen in previous seasons at this time.

P&I Deaths*, Multi-Year Regression Model
P&I = pneumonia and influenza

Figure 4 shows the number of preliminary estimated P&I deaths* for all Florida counties, the number of deaths predicted using a multi-year regression model, and the upper bound of the 95% confidence interval for this prediction.

For week 15 (ending April 15, 2017), 220 preliminary estimated P&I deaths were reported.

The upper bound of the 95% confidence interval for prediction is 259 deaths, with no excess deaths.

* Current season P&I death counts are preliminary estimates and may change as more data are received. The most recent data available are displayed here. Vital statistics death records received in ESSENCE-FL are considered to be complete through week 15,2017.
Figures 5-7 show the number of pediatric deaths associated with influenza infection, week 40, 2012 to week 16, 2017. One influenza-associated pediatric death was reported in week 16 in a child with an underlying health condition. The child was positive for influenza A (H3) and was not known to be vaccinated for the 2016-17 influenza season.

Nine influenza-associated pediatric deaths have been reported in Florida so far this season. While rare, Florida receives reports of influenza-associated pediatric deaths each season. Most deaths occur in unvaccinated children with underlying health conditions. Children, especially those with underlying health conditions, are at higher risk of severe outcomes from influenza infection.

Annual vaccination remains the best way to protect against influenza. It is not too late to vaccinate children for the 2016-17 influenza season. CDC recommends vaccination as long as influenza viruses are circulating. To learn more, please visit: www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/whoshouldvax.htm#annual-vaccination.

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**County Influenza and ILI Activity Maps**

County influenza activity data are reported by county health departments through EpiGateway on a weekly basis. Information is used to determine county activity and includes laboratory results, outbreak reports, and ILI activity. The figures below reflect a county health department’s assessment of influenza activity within their county. For week 16, six counties reported increasing activity, 20 counties reported activity at a plateau, and 41 counties reported decreasing activity.

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**Influenza-Associated Pediatric Deaths**

**Figures 5-7**

Figures 5-7 show the number of pediatric deaths associated with influenza infection, week 40, 2012 to week 16, 2017.

One influenza-associated pediatric death was reported in week 16 in a child with an underlying health condition. The child was positive for influenza A (H3) and was not known to be vaccinated for the 2016-17 influenza season.

Nine influenza-associated pediatric deaths have been reported in Florida so far this season. While rare, Florida receives reports of influenza-associated pediatric deaths each season. Most deaths occur in unvaccinated children with underlying health conditions. Children, especially those with underlying health conditions, are at higher risk of severe outcomes from influenza infection.

Annual vaccination remains the best way to protect against influenza. It is not too late to vaccinate children for the 2016-17 influenza season. CDC recommends vaccination as long as influenza viruses are circulating. To learn more, please visit: www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/whoshouldvax.htm#annual-vaccination.
Reported Influenza and ILI Outbreaks
ILI = influenza-like illness

Map 3 shows influenza and ILI outbreaks by county for week 40, 2016 through week 16, 2017.

In week 16, two outbreaks were reported into Merlin: one outbreak of influenza and one outbreak of currently unknown etiology. As of week 16, 145 outbreaks of influenza or ILI have been reported in the 2016-17 influenza season.

For more information on influenza and ILI outbreaks reported in week 16 and updated information on influenza and ILI outbreaks reported in week 15, see page 6. Data presented on outbreaks are preliminary and subject to change as outbreak investigations progress.

Table 1: Summary of Florida Influenza and ILI Outbreaks by Setting, Week 40, 2016 through Week 16, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>A (H3)</th>
<th>A 2009 (H1N1)</th>
<th>A Unsubtyped</th>
<th>A &amp; B Unsubtyped</th>
<th>B Yamagata</th>
<th>B Victoria</th>
<th>B Unsubtyped</th>
<th>Influenza Unspecified</th>
<th>Other respiratory viruses</th>
<th>Currently unknown pathogen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daycares</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1-RSV</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jails &amp; prisons</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health facilities</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing homes &amp; long-term care facilities</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2-RSV</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care facilities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8 shows the distribution of outbreaks by facility type and season.

In week 16, two outbreaks of influenza or ILI were reported.

Seasons in which influenza A (H3) predominates have been associated with more severe illness, particularly adults ≥65 years old. As such, it is expected that outbreaks will occur in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.
In week 16, two outbreaks were reported into Merlin.

**Pasco County:**
- An elementary school reported 40 students with ILI. No specimens have been available for testing at BPHL thus far. The etiology of this outbreak is not yet known. Vaccination status for the 2016-17 influenza season for all students and staff members is currently unknown. Infection control measures were reviewed with facility leadership. This investigation is ongoing.

**Pinellas County:**
- An assisted living facility reported three residents with ILI. One resident was hospitalized. Three residents were positive for influenza B by rapid antigen testing at local health care providers. No specimens have been available for testing at BPHL thus far. Vaccination status for the 2016-17 influenza season for all residents and staff members is currently unknown. Infection control measures were reviewed with facility leadership. This investigation is ongoing.

In week 15 (ending April 15, 2017), five outbreaks were reported into Merlin. Of those, two outbreaks were updated in week 16.

**Marion County:**
- A correctional facility reported five inmates with ILI. No specimens have been available for testing at BPHL thus far. The etiology of this outbreak is not yet known. Vaccination status for the 2016-17 influenza season for all inmates and staff members is currently unknown. Infection control measures were reviewed with facility leadership. This investigation is ongoing.

  **Update:** Two additional inmates with ILI were identified. Two specimens collected for testing at BPHL were positive for influenza B Victoria lineage by PCR. This investigation is now closed.

**Hillsborough County:**
- A daycare reported three individuals with ILI. No specimens have been available for testing at BPHL thus far. The etiology of this outbreak is not yet known. Vaccination status for the 2016-17 influenza season for all attendees and staff members is currently unknown. Infection control measures were reviewed with facility leadership. This investigation is ongoing.

  **Update:** Four additional individuals with ILI were identified. Two individuals tested positive for influenza A by rapid antigen testing at local health care providers. This investigation is now closed.
BPHL Viral Influenza Specimen Testing
BPHL = Bureau of Public Health Laboratories

**Figures 9 and 10** use BPHL viral surveillance data.

*Figure 9* shows the number of influenza-positive specimens tested by subtype and lab event date.*

In recent weeks, the most common influenza subtype detected at BPHL statewide has been influenza A (H3). Seasons in which A (H3) viruses predominate have been associated with more severe illness in young children and adults ≥65 years old.

In recent weeks, the percent of specimens testing positive for influenza B viruses at BPHL increased. This change has also been observed nationally. This late season circulation of influenza B is expected.

*Figure 10* shows the number of specimens tested by BPHL and the percent that were positive for influenza by lab event date*.

In week 16, the percent of specimens testing positive for influenza increased but remained similar to levels observed in previous seasons at this time.

**Lab event date** is defined as the earliest of the following dates associated with influenza testing at the laboratory: date specimen collected, date received by the laboratory, date reported, or date inserted.

**Influenza A inconclusive test results are due to technical difficulties including an insufficient sample for testing or internal sample control failure and occur occasionally in routine laboratory testing.**

There is no week 53 for the 2013-14, 2015-16, and 2016-17 seasons; the week 53 data point for those seasons is an average of weeks 52 and 1.

Regional ILI Visits

ED and UCC Visits for ILI by Region

ED = emergency department, UCC = urgent care center, ILI = influenza-like illness

Figures 11-17 show the percent of visits for ILI from ED and UCC chief complaints for ESSENCE-FL participating facilities (n=295), by ESSENCE-FL Regional Domestic Security Task Force (RDSTF) regions (see map 4) from week 40, 2013 to week 16, 2017*.

In week 16, the percent of ED and UCC visits for ILI increased in regions 2 and 4. ILI activity decreased in all other regions. In region 1, ILI activity remained slightly above levels observed in previous seasons at this time. ILI activity in all other regions was within the range of levels observed in previous seasons at this time.

*There is no week 53 for the 2013-14, 2015-16, and 2016-17 seasons; the week 53 data point for those seasons is an average of weeks 52 and 1.
Figure 19 shows the number of visits for ILI reported by ILINet outpatient providers statewide (n=42) by age group, week 40, 2013 to week 16, 2017.

In week 16, the number of visits for ILI decreased in all age groups. Levels were similar to or below those seen in previous seasons at this time in all age groups.

Figure 18 shows the percent of visits for ILI from ED and UCC chief complaints by age group for ESSENCE-FL participating facilities (n=295), week 40, 2013 to week 16, 2017.

In week 16, ED and UCC visits for ILI decreased in all age groups. Levels were above those observed in previous seasons at this time in the 0-4 and ≥65 age groups. Levels were similar to those observed in previous seasons at this time in the 5-24 and 25-64 age groups.

Figure 19 shows the number of visits for ILI reported by ILINet outpatient providers statewide (n=42) by age group, week 40, 2013 to week 16, 2017.

In week 16, the number of visits for ILI decreased in all age groups. Levels were similar to or below those seen in previous seasons at this time in all age groups.

*Data presented here are counts, not proportions. This is because age group denominator data is not available through ILINet.

Figure 20 shows P&I deaths* for all Florida counties by age group, as reported into ESSENCE-FL, week 40, 2013 to week 15, 2017.

In week 15 (ending April 15, 2017), the number of P&I deaths decreased or remained the same in all age groups. Levels were similar to or below those seen in previous seasons at this time in all age groups.

*Current season P&I death numbers are preliminary estimates and may change as more data are received. The most recent data available are displayed here. Vital statistics death records received in ESSENCE-FL are currently considered to be complete through week 15, 2017.
ESSENCE-FL collects data daily from 295 EDs and UCCs. Data are processed into 11 different syndrome categories based on the patient’s chief complaint. One of the categories is ILI, which is composed of chief complaints that include the words “influenza” or “flu,” or complaints that contain “fever” and “cough,” or “fever” and “sore throat.” The Florida Department of Health uses ED and UCC chief complaint data to monitor influenza and ILI activity in a timely manner in groups at higher risk of severe health outcomes (such as hospitalization and death) from influenza infection. These at-risk groups include pregnant women, children ≤18 years old, and adults ≥65 years old.

**ED and UCC Visits for ILI by Pregnant Women**

Pregnant women are at higher risk for severe complications due to influenza infection.

*Figure 21* shows the number of visits* to EDs and UCCs with chief complaints of influenza infection and pregnancy, as reported into ESSENCE-FL, week 40, 2013 to week 16, 2017.

In week 16, the number of visits to EDs and UCCs by pregnant women with mention of influenza decreased. Levels were similar to those observed in previous seasons at this time.

**ED and UCC Visits for ILI by Children ≤18 Years Old**

*Figure 22* shows the percent of ILI visits among all ED and UCC visits for children ≤18 years old, as reported into ESSENCE-FL, week 40, 2013 to week 16, 2017.

In week 16, the percent of ILI visits among all ED and UCC visits for children ≤18 years old decreased and was similar to levels observed in previous seasons at this time.

**ED and UCC Visits for ILI by Adults ≥65 Years Old**

*Figure 23* shows the percent of ILI visits among all ED and UCC visits for adults ≥65 years old, as reported into ESSENCE-FL, week 40, 2013 to week 16, 2017.

In week 16, the percent of ILI visits among all ED and UCC visits for adults ≥65 years old decreased. Levels were slightly above those observed in previous seasons at this time. Seasons where influenza A (H3) predominates have been associated with more severe illness, particularly in adults ≥65 years old.

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*This count under-represents the true number of pregnant women presenting for care to EDs and UCCs with influenza. The overall trend has been validated through review of hospital discharge data collected by the Agency for Health Care Administration.*
County health departments are asked to evaluate influenza activity in certain settings within their county. The assessment scale for activity ranges from no or minimal activity to very high activity.

**Figure 24** shows the results of the influenza activity assessment for week 16, 2017. Counties that reported “not applicable” for the listed settings are excluded from the denominator in the calculations below.

**ILI Activity by Setting Type**

ILI = influenza-like illness

ILI Activity Levels:
- No or very minimal activity
- Moderate activity
- High activity
- Very high activity

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**Settings for Children <18 Years Old**

In **elementary schools**, 56 counties (84.8%) reported no or minimal influenza or ILI activity. One county (1.5%) reported moderate influenza or ILI activity.

In **daycare settings**, 51 counties (85.0%) reported no or minimal influenza or ILI activity.

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**Settings for Adults >65 Years Old**

In **nursing homes**, 51 counties (79.7%) reported no or minimal influenza or ILI activity. Three counties (4.7%) reported moderate influenza or ILI activity.

In **retirement homes**, 41 counties (78.8%) reported no or minimal influenza or ILI activity.

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**Settings for Adults 18 to 65 Years Old**

In **colleges**, 32 of 44 counties (72.7%) reported no or minimal influenza or ILI activity.

In **businesses**, 38 counties (73.1%) reported no or minimal influenza or ILI activity.

In **government offices**, 44 counties (78.6%) reported no or minimal influenza or ILI activity.

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**Other Unique Settings**

In **jails and prisons**, 50 counties (83.3%) reported no or minimal influenza or ILI activity.

In **health care settings**, including rehabilitation facilities and mental health facilities, 48 counties (73.8%) reported no or minimal influenza or ILI activity. Eight counties (12.3%) reported moderate influenza or ILI activity.
RSV activity:
- In week 16, the percent of children <5 years old diagnosed with RSV at EDs and UCCs decreased but remained above levels observed in previous seasons at this time.
- The percent of specimens testing positive for RSV decreased and was similar to levels observed in previous seasons at this time.
- To learn more about RSV in Florida, please visit: http://www.floridahealth.gov/rsv.

RSV Seasonality:
- RSV activity in Florida typically peaks in November through January, though activity can vary dramatically by region. According to CDC, the start of RSV season is marked by the first two consecutive weeks during which the average percentage of specimens testing positive for RSV is ≥10%.
- Florida has established regular RSV seasons based on these thresholds.
- Florida’s RSV season is longer than the rest of the nation and has distinct regional seasonality. For more information on RSV seasonality in Florida, see the American Academy of Pediatrics’ 2015 Red Book.

RSV surveillance goals:
- A statewide RSV surveillance system was implemented in Florida to support clinical decision-making for prophylaxis of premature infants. The determination of unique seasonal and geographic trends of RSV activity has important implications as it relates to prescribing patterns for initiating prophylaxis to children at high risk for RSV infection.
- See the back page of this report for more information on RSV surveillance systems used in Florida: page 14.

Figure 25 shows the percent of visits to EDs and UCCs with discharge diagnoses that include RSV or RSV-associated illness, as reported by participating ESSSENCE-FL facilities (n=295), week 30, 2013 to week 16, 2017.

In week 16, the percent of children presenting to participating EDs and UCCs for care with RSV decreased. Levels were above those observed in previous seasons at this time.

*This overall trend has been validated through review of hospital discharge data collected by the Agency for Health Care Administration.

Figure 26 shows the percent of laboratory results testing positive for RSV, as reported by hospital laboratories (n=11), week 30, 2013 to week 16, 2017.

In week 16, the percent of specimens testing positive for RSV decreased and was similar to levels observed in previous seasons at this time.
Statewide activity:
- In week 16, the percent of specimens testing positive for influenza decreased and was similar to levels observed in previous seasons at this time.
- The percent of specimens testing positive for RSV decreased and was similar observed in previous seasons at this time.
- The percent of specimens testing positive for rhinovirus increased but remained similar to levels observed in previous seasons at this time.
- The percent of specimens testing positive for parainfluenza 1-3 decreased and was similar to levels observed in previous seasons at this time.

Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) activity:
- In week 16, no new cases of EV-D68 were identified in Florida. No cases have been identified in Florida since May 2016.
  - Eight cases of EV-D68 were identified in Florida in 2016. These eight cases were identified in different regions of the state and represent the full spectrum of disease. These were the first identifications of EV-D68 in the United States since the fall of 2014.
  - Six of these cases were identified as a result of Florida’s participation in the Acute Respiratory Infection Epidemiology and Surveillance Program (ARIES).
  - To learn more about EV-D68, please visit: http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/d68.

Outbreaks:
- In week 16, no outbreaks of RSV, parainfluenza, adenovirus, human metapneumovirus (MPV), rhinovirus, enterovirus, or coronavirus were reported.

Laboratory Viral Respiratory Surveillance

Figure 27 shows the percent of laboratory results testing positive for eight common respiratory viruses, as reported by hospital laboratories (n=11), week 40, 2013 to week 16, 2017.

In week 16, the percent of specimens testing positive for influenza continued to decrease and was similar to levels observed in previous seasons at this time.

Non-Influenza ARIES Laboratory Outpatient Surveillance*

ARIES = Acute Respiratory Infection Epidemiology and Surveillance Program

Figure 28 shows the number of specimens testing positive for 12 common respiratory viruses, as reported by BPHL and ARIES outpatient providers statewide (n=7), week 40, 2015 to week 15, 2017.

In week 15 (ending April 15, 2017), specimens submitted by ARIES providers tested positive for rhinovirus, RSV, MPV, parainfluenza 2, parainfluenza 3, adenovirus, and coronavirus NL63.

*Data presented here are counts, not proportions. The most recent data available are displayed here. ARIES laboratory data are currently considered to be complete through week 15, 2017. Laboratory results for specimens that have not yet been tested in full will be included in future reports.
For more information about reportable diseases, please visit www.Floridahealth.gov/diseasesreporting or pandemic strains are reported by CHDs into Merlin, Florida’s reportable disease surveillance system. Influenza deaths in children with laboratory-confirmed influenza infection and patients with influenza infection due to novel or pandemic strains are counted as P&I deaths. Any mention of P&I in the death certificate literals, with certain exceptions, is counted as a P&I death.

For respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) surveillance, visits are counted as ED or UCC visits to participating facilities for which RSV or RSV-associated illness is included in the discharge diagnosis. Death record literals are also queried using a free-text query that searches for references to RSV on death certificates for children <18 years old. Any mention of RSV in the death certificate literals, with certain exceptions, is counted as an RSV-associated pediatric death.

County health department (CHD) epidemiologists report their county’s influenza and ILI surveillance data weekly into the EpiGateway website. Influenza activity is classified as: no activity, mild, moderate, or elevated. Setting-specific influenza activity and influenza trend information is also reported. EpiGateway data provided by CHDs creates a county-by-county breakdown of influenza and ILI activity around the state.

Outbreak Reporting in Merlin: Merlin tracks influenza and ILI outbreak investigations by CHDs. Reports by CHDs include the type of respiratory disease causing the outbreak and settings where outbreaks are occurring. CHD epidemiologists report outbreaks of influenza or ILI into Merlin, Florida’s reportable disease surveillance system.

Outbreaks are defined as two or more cases of influenza or ILI in a specific setting.

Bureau of Public Health Laboratories (BPHL): BPHL performs confirmatory testing and subtyping on surveillance specimens from sentinel providers, outbreak investigations, patients with severe or unusual influenza presentations, and medical examiners.


Laboratory Viral Respiratory Surveillance: The National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) and Electronic Laboratory Reporting (ELR) collect data from laboratories in Florida on a weekly basis and monitor temporal and geographic patterns of eight commonly circulating respiratory viruses. NREVSS data is collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ELR data is collected by the Florida Department of Health (DOH).

Acute Respiratory Infection Epidemiology and Surveillance (ARIES) Program: ARIES is a nationwide surveillance system composed of nine participating jurisdictions. Florida has seven sentinel providers enrolled in ARIES who submit weekly ILI and ARI (acute respiratory infection) counts, as well as submit ARI and ILI specimens to BPHL for testing.

Case-Based Influenza Surveillance:

- Deaths in children with laboratory-confirmed influenza infection and patients with influenza infection due to novel or pandemic strains are reportable in Florida. Influenza-associated pediatric deaths and cases of influenza infection due to novel or pandemic strains are reported by CHDs into Merlin, DOH’s reportable disease surveillance system.
- For more information about reportable diseases, please visit www.Floridahealth.gov/diseasereporting.