

Health Update:**Influenza in Missouri, 2013-2014****January 31, 2014**

This document will be updated as new information becomes available. The current version can always be viewed at <http://www.health.mo.gov>

The Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) is now using 4 types of documents to provide important information to medical and public health professionals, and to other interested persons:

Health Alerts convey information of the highest level of importance which warrants immediate action or attention from Missouri health providers, emergency responders, public health agencies or the public.

Health Advisories provide important information for a specific incident or situation, including that impacting neighboring states; may not require immediate action.

Health Guidances contain comprehensive information pertaining to a particular disease or condition, and include recommendations, guidelines, etc. endorsed by DHSS.

Health Updates provide new or updated information on an incident or situation; can also provide information to update a previously sent Health Alert, Health Advisory, or Health Guidance; unlikely to require immediate action.

**Health Update
January 31, 2014****FROM: GAIL VASTERLING
DIRECTOR****SUBJECT: Influenza in Missouri, 2013-2014**

On December 26, 2013, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) issued a Health Advisory containing information on the current influenza season as well as recommendations on diagnostic testing and the use of antiviral drugs (<http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/ert/alertsadvories/pdf/HAd122613.pdf>). This Health Update summarizes influenza activity in Missouri through late January, and provides information on how medical providers and facilities can access DHSS' Weekly Influenza Report.

Through the week ending January 25, 2014 (Week 4):

- Missouri is reporting widespread influenza activity*, with 14,856 influenza cases reported since the beginning of the 2013-2014 season. These cases represent all laboratory and aggregate influenza reports. (The actual numbers of persons with influenza exceed the numbers reported since not all infected individuals seek care and undergo testing.)
- A total of ten specimens were received by the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory (MSPHL) for viral testing during Week 4; two were positive for 2009 influenza A (H1N1) virus and eight were negative. The most common influenza subtype detected by MSPHL this season has been 2009 influenza A (H1N1) virus.
- There have been no reported outbreaks or school closures due to influenza-like illness (ILI) for the 2013-2014 season.
- No pediatric influenza-associated deaths have been reported during the 2013-2014 season.
- In Week 4, the statewide rate of ILI visits per total visits to hospital emergency rooms reported through the ESSENCE syndromic surveillance system was 2.7%. Northwest Region reported 2.0%, Central Region 2.7%, Eastern Region 2.1%, Southeast Region 3.6%, and Southwest Region 4.1%.

Medical providers should be aware that DHSS publishes a Weekly Influenza Report each Tuesday from early October through May. (The most recent report can be accessed at <http://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/influenza/reports.php>.) It provides a comprehensive assessment of influenza activity in the state, and contains aggregate influenza information at a county, regional, and state level. Selected influenza positive samples are tested for subtype by MSPHL, and results are shown in the report. DHSS currently utilizes ESSENCE, a syndromic surveillance system, to monitor trends in chief complaints among persons presenting to hospital emergency rooms throughout the state. ESSENCE data pertaining to ILI complaints are numerically and graphically shown in the report. The report also contains information from facilities enrolled in ILINet, which collects data on outpatient visits at participating locations throughout the state and calculates the fraction of patients presenting with ILI among all patients presenting to the facility during the surveillance week. Information on influenza outbreaks, rates of influenza and

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pneumonia hospitalizations, and pediatric influenza deaths in the state is also included in the report, as are national influenza prevalence data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Up-to-date reports on influenza activity nationwide are available from CDC at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivitysurv.htm>

CDC recommendations on the use of influenza antiviral drugs are available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/index.htm>

Influenza activity is likely to continue for some time. CDC and DHSS recommend that anyone aged 6 months and older who has not gotten influenza vaccine this season should be vaccinated now. All of this season's influenza vaccines include coverage for influenza A (H1N1) virus. Complete CDC recommendations on the use of influenza vaccines are available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/index.htm>

DHSS has a website designed for medical providers and public health professionals that contains links to comprehensive information on seasonal influenza and its prevention and treatment. Go to:

<http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/ert/med/seasonal.php>

Questions regarding DHSS' weekly influenza report, as well as other influenza-related questions, can be directed to the department's Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention at 573/751-6113.

*Widespread influenza activity is defined as: increased influenza-like illness (ILI) and/or institutional outbreaks (ILI or laboratory confirmed) in at least half of the state's regions AND recent (within the past 3 weeks) laboratory confirmed influenza in the state.