

West Virginia Influenza Summary, Week Ending January 5, 2013 (MMWR Week 1)

Dear Influenza Partners,

West Virginia has reported influenza activity as “**Widespread**” for MMWR week 1 (week ending Saturday January 5, 2013).

Influenza season is in full swing across West Virginia and although it’s an earlier than normal season it is in line with what we would expect to see. The proportion of outpatient visits for Influenza-like Illness (ILI) was at 4.5%. This is the 4th consecutive week that ILI was above the state baseline of 2.2%. In the past 10 seasons ILI was above baseline on average 12 consecutive weeks. Influenza AH3 remains the prominent strain seen in West Virginia. There have been no pediatric influenza associated deaths reported in West Virginia. There have been some localized reports of antiviral shortages, however there is no national antiviral shortage. Clinicians and facilities are encouraged to seek alternate resources to obtain antivirals for treatment and chemoprophylaxis.

Nationally influenza activity remains elevated. Data indicates that in some regions of the US influenza activity appears to have peaked with other areas still reporting an increase in activity. The data will need to be monitored over the next few weeks to see if those areas of the US who first reported influenza activity are starting to see a decrease or if its just a decline in reporting due to the holiday season. Currently there have been 20 pediatric influenza associated deaths reported in the US.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published early estimates of the effectiveness of this season’s influenza vaccine. Findings suggest that this season’s vaccine so far is reducing the risk of having to go to the doctor for influenza by about 60% for people who got vaccinated. Although the influenza vaccine is not a perfect tool, it is still the best protection against getting the flu. In addition, the influenza vaccine has been shown to offer substantial other benefits including, reducing illness, antibiotic use, time lost from work, hospitalizations, and deaths. For anyone 6 months of age and older who has not gotten vaccinated yet this season should get vaccinated. For a copy of this Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report please visit the Influenza website at:

<http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/flu/Pages/default.aspx>.

Weekly influenza surveillance graphs for West Virginia can be found at the website: <http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/flu/Pages/fluSurveillance.aspx>. Because of late reporting, we must sometimes update information in retrospect. The website will always have the most up-to-date numbers. Please feel free to contact us at (304)-558-5358, extension 1, with any questions regarding this report.