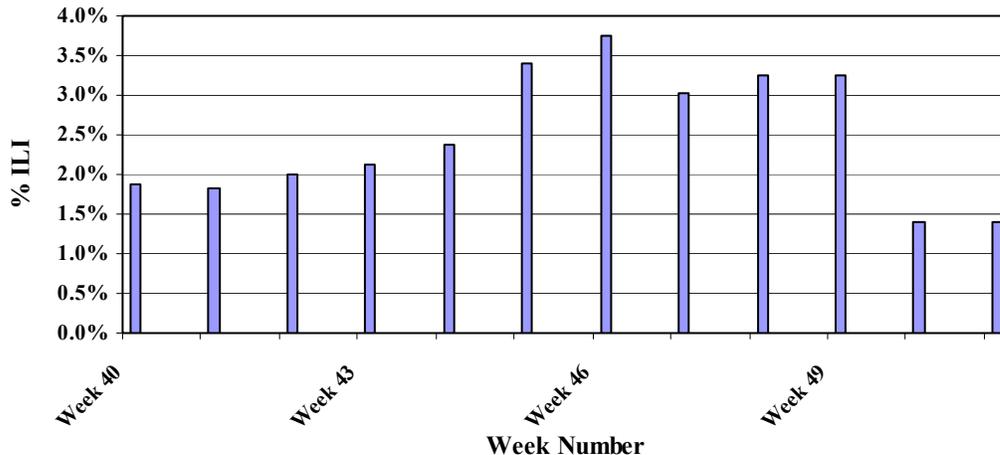


Date: December 27, 2002
To: Health Care Provider
From: Linh Nguyen, MPH, Epidemiologist
Subject: Influenza Report for Week 51 (December 15-21, 2002)

Criteria for inclusion as a case of Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) are fever $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ (37.8°C) and cough or sore throat. Health care providers wishing to participate in the ongoing Clark County Health District (CCHD) Influenza Surveillance Program should contact Linh Nguyen, Surveillance Coordinator, at (702) 383-1378.

Forty cases of ILI were reported during week 51. The weighted average over the seven reporting sites was **1.4%**, which is below the national baseline of 1.9%. The percentage of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) in Las Vegas was **7.2%**. The national P&I mortality for week 51 is not yet available. The national P&I mortality for week 50 was 6.6%. The percentages of ILI cases in Clark County for week 40 to week 51 for the 2002-2003 surveillance season are presented in the following figure. The percentage of ILI might be skewed for weeks 50 and 51, since ILI data from several sentinel sites was not available.

**Percentage of Influenza-Like Illnesses (ILI) Cases By Week
Weighted Average, Weeks 40-51, 2002**



Although rapid diagnostic tests for influenza are useful and readily available, the collection of clinical specimens for influenza viral culture is critical, because only culture isolates can provide specific information regarding circulating influenza subtypes and strains. This information is needed to compare current circulating influenza strains with vaccine strains, to formulate vaccine for the coming year, and to guide decisions regarding influenza treatment. Virus isolates also are needed to monitor the emergence of antiviral drug resistance and the emergence of novel influenza A subtypes that might pose a pandemic threat. The Office of Epidemiology (OOE) has a limited amount of influenza culture test kits available free of charge to healthcare providers wishing to provide clinical specimens for viral culture. Interested participants should contact the OOE at (702) 383-1378.

Reference: MMWR. Prevention and Control of Influenza. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). April 20, 2001/ 50(RR04); 1-46.

This newsletter is also posted on the Clark County Health District webpage for health care practitioners. See http://www.cchd.org/physician/physician_only.htm for this and other health and bioterrorism related information.

Each year from October through May, the Centers for Disease Control provide weekly updates on U.S. influenza activity. The information is online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/flu/weekly.htm>