

Laboratory surveillance

Throughout the influenza season, the State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL) solicits specimens from physicians, hospitals, reference and clinical laboratories. SHL conducts confirmatory testing for surveillance. Specimens are sometimes submitted for confirmation of rapid antigen results.

SHL also runs a web-based survey program where laboratorians report the number of influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) rapid tests performed and the number of tests positive weekly.

For more information about this program or to enroll in the weekly rapid test reporting program, contact SHL at 319-335-4500.

Mortality surveillance

IDPH reports the number of deaths occurring in Polk County through the CDC 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System. IISN tracks the number of those for which influenza is listed as the underlying or contributing cause of death.

In addition, IISN tracks influenza-related pediatric deaths (<18 years) and severe illness/deaths in pregnant or postpartum woman.

Mortality surveillance also involves collaboration with the Iowa Office of the State Medical Examiner (IOSME). IOSME frequently communicates unusual clusters of deaths attributed to infectious disease and serves as the central communicating entity with the 99 county-level medical examiners in Iowa.

If you are interested in participating in the IISN, contact Yumei Sun at yumei.sun@idph.iowa.gov or by phone at 515-281-7134.

Resources

Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network
www.idph.state.ia.us/cade/influenza.aspx

State Hygienic Laboratory
Influenza testing information
www.shl.uiowa.edu/services/influenza

Program Contacts

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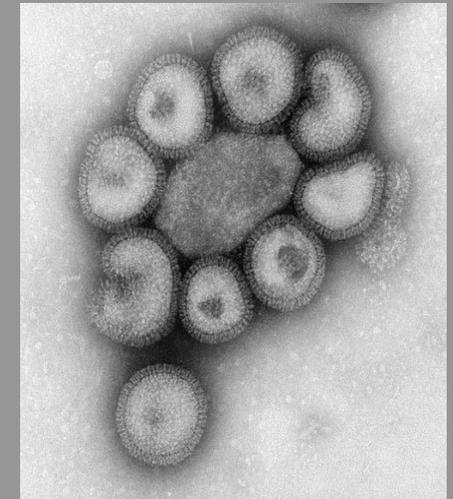
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Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health

Mariannette Miller-Meeks, B.S.N., M.Ed., M.D.
Director



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Governor

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Overview

The Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network (IISN) was created in 2004. The IISN has five surveillance program areas:

- Outpatient health care provider
- Hospital-based
- School-based
- Laboratory
- Mortality

Seasonal influenza surveillance is generally conducted in October through May every year. The IISN is a collaborative effort between IDPH and its many partners, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), local public health departments, clinical laboratories, hospitals, healthcare providers, clinics, medical examiners, and schools. The objectives of the surveillance are the following:

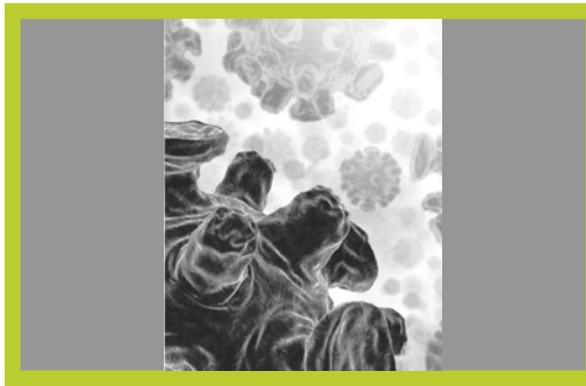
- Establish when and where influenza is present in Iowa
- Ascertain how influenza is affecting Iowans
- Determine the strains of influenza in Iowa
- Measure the severity of the circulating influenza strains
- Characterize the population affected
- Provide timely information to the public, health care providers, and public health agencies.

Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet)

ILINet is a CDC program that consists of more than 3,000 healthcare providers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands reporting over 25 million patient visits each year. Medical providers of any specialty (e.g., family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, infectious diseases) in nearly any setting (e.g., private practice, public health clinic, urgent care center, emergency room, university student health center) are eligible to be ILINet providers.

ILINet providers are asked to track and report the following every week:

- Number of patients seen with Influenza-like illness (ILI) by age group (0-4, 5-24, 25-49, 50-64, and >64 years)
- Total number of patients seen



The ILINet data is entered into a simple, web-based reporting system maintained by CDC. Time spent on this program for most sites is less than one hour per week.

Incentives for ILINet providers

- Free laboratory-testing performed by the State Hygienic Laboratory (SHL). Test kits and courier service are provided at no cost, and results are available real-time through a web-based reporting system.
- Subscriptions to the Emerging Infectious Diseases Journal and MMWR weekly reports.
- Weekly statewide activity reports
- Recognition by the CDC and the Iowa Department of Public Health.

School-based surveillance

IDPH tracks the percent of students absent due to illness each week from sentinel schools in Iowa. This data provides excellent trends for influenza activity as well as age-specific information used to target vaccination efforts and messages.

Program participants are asked to track and report the following weekly:

- Number of students enrolled
- Number of students absent due to illness

All information is reported into a web-based reporting system. Time spent on this program is less than 30 minutes per week for most schools.

The IISN utilizes data from more than 350 surveillance sites weekly, year-round.

All information is reported into a web-based reporting system. Time spent on this program is less than 30 minutes per week for most schools.

Incentives for school participants

- Weekly statewide activity reports
- Certificate of appreciation from the State of Iowa

Hospital-based surveillance

Since 2007, the IDPH has collaborated with hospitals throughout Iowa to assess the impact of influenza. Hospitalization data provides invaluable insight into how severely an influenza strain is impacting a population. This type of surveillance is also key to detecting shifts in virulence, antiviral resistance, and vaccine efficacy.

Program participants are asked to report the following weekly:

- Number of influenza-associated hospitalizations by age group (0-4, 5-24, 25-49, 50-64, and >64 years)
- Total number of inpatients

Time spent participating in this program is less than one hour per week for most sites.

Incentives for hospital participants

- Weekly statewide activity reports
- Certificate of appreciation from the State of Iowa