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Influenza (FLU) Update for Week #18 Week Ending 5-5-18

Continued good news about Flu but two indicators still have not abated. Specifically, the rate of hospitalizations from flu continued to increase and there were still a couple of pediatric deaths reported this week but they were during previous weeks. For the fifth time in-a-row since this Flu season became active, influenza activity (ILI) was below the national baseline but remained the same as last week. The number of flu cases once again decreased.

See this link for more details, including charts, graphs, and maps: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly>

A quick glance at the graphs for *Percentages of Visits for ILI and Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality Surveillance*, gives a pictorial presentation of the severity of this flu season.

FirstWatch RIN (Reginal Influenza Network) Alerts occurred rarely, which correlated with CDC reports of continued decreased activity.

For the most recently reported week ending May 5, 2018, the CDC reported:

--ILI visits to clinics and other non-hospital facilities remained at 1.5% for the second week in-a-row and was below the baseline of 2.2%. For the fourth week in-a-row, only one region was listed as "ELEVATED" but it was Region 2 (New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico & the U.S. Virgin Islands) instead of Region 1. All other Regions were listed as "NORMAL".

--Flu cases (documented by positive flu tests) decreased again but remained elevated with widespread flu reported in 3 states. "NO ACTIVITY" was reported by Alabama, Mississippi and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Clinical lab testing for influenza was positive for flu in 6.5% of the total tests (compared with 7.4% last week). Influenza B remained the dominant flu type with 65.0% of the positive flu tests reported. The remainder of the positive flu tests were Influenza A at 35.0%.

The CDC provides an interactive U.S. map that will link to each state's public health authorities, ILI and flu information and processes, as well as other diseases and public health topics. Find it at this site: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/usmap.htm>

--For Influenza-Like Illness (ILI)

Low ILI Activity (Puerto Rico & 1 state): Arizona

Minimal Activity (New York City, Washington D.C., & 49 states): Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming

--For Flu (positive flu tests)

Widespread Activity (3 states): Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York

Regional Activity (Guam, Puerto Rico & 4 states): Kentucky, Maine, New Jersey, and Utah

Local Activity (16 states): Alaska, Arizona, Delaware, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin

Sporadic Activity (Washington D.C., & 25 states): Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and Wyoming

No Activity (U.S. Virgin Islands & 2 states): Alabama and Mississippi



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--Other Data:

Hospitalizations from Flu since Oct. 1, 2017 have had a cumulative rate of 106.5 per 100,000. The cumulative and each age group again reported higher rates than those of the previous week and higher than at the same point in the "Severe" 2014-15 Flu Season. Specifically, those 65 years and older with 459.7 per 100,000 (454.3/100,000 last week); ages 50-64 at 115.7 per 100,000 (114.4/100,000); and ages 0-4 at 74.7 per 100,000 (73.5/100,000). The percentage of pregnant women from the females of childbearing age group (15-44) who were hospitalized were at/near 30% (30.3%), a slight decrease.

Death rates for pneumonia & influenza in adults decreased slightly from last week to 6.0% (6.2% last week) which, for the sixth week in-a-row, fell below the epidemic threshold of 7.0% for Week #16, ending 4/21/18.

There were 2 more pediatric deaths from Flu reported in Week #18; the deaths occurred during weeks# 10 and 12. This is a **total of 165** for this flu season, which has surpassed the total number of deaths for the severe flu season of 2014-15.

--Flu in Canada and Europe for Week #18:

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), in general, influenza activity decreased again although some areas in Eastern & Central Canada reported localized activity. Many flu indicators are near or below the average for this time of the year. The majority of the diagnosed flu cases, hospitalizations, and deaths remained in those 65 years and older.

For more info see: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza.html>

The European Center for Disease Prevention & Control (ECDC) reported that flu activity was at levels typically seen between Flu seasons except in one country. Lab tests from PCPs were positive for flu 6% of the time with more Influenza B than A circulating. This influenza season (Week #52 to Week #12) lasted longer than recent previous seasons and is likely one of the causes of such a severe season. The majority of severe cases were from Influenza B and occurred in those > age 15. Mortality has returned to typical levels for all 20 countries providing data. **For more info see:** <http://www.flunewseurope.org/>

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