SUMMARY

During the week ending February 24, 2018, influenza-like illness (ILI) intensity in Maryland was HIGH and there was WIDESPREAD geographic activity. The proportion of outpatient visits for ILI reported by Sentinel Providers and by Maryland Emergency Departments decreased. The proportion of MRITS respondents reporting ILI decreased. Clinical laboratories reported a decrease in the proportion of specimens testing positive for influenza. Eighty-four specimens tested positive for influenza at the MDH lab. There were 253 influenza-associated hospitalizations. The cumulative season number of influenza-associated deaths among hospitalized adults was 46. Seven respiratory outbreaks were reported to MDH.

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ILI Net Sentinel Providers

Twenty-five sentinel providers reported a total of 8,484 visits this week. Of those, 363 (4.3%) were visits for ILI. This is above the Maryland baseline of 2.0%.

Visits to Emergency Departments for ILI

Emergency Departments in Maryland reported a total of 42,368 visits this week through the ESSENCE surveillance system. Of those, 2,475 (5.8%) were visits for ILI.
**Maryland Weekly Influenza Surveillance Activity Report**

A summary of influenza surveillance indicators reported to MDH for the week ending February 24, 2018

**Community-based Influenza Surveillance (MRITS)**

MRITS is the Maryland Resident Influenza Tracking System, a weekly survey for influenza-like illness (ILI). A total of 590 residents responded to the MRITS survey this week. Of those, 5 (0.8%) reported having ILI and missing greater than 21 cumulative days of regular daily activities.

**Clinical Laboratory Influenza Testing**

There were 56 clinical laboratories reporting 9,038 influenza diagnostic tests, mostly rapid influenza diagnostic tests (RIDTs). Of those, 2,643 (29.2%) were positive for influenza. Of those testing positive, 1,492 (56%) were influenza Type A and 1,151 (44%) were influenza Type B. The reliability of RIDTs depends largely on the conditions under which they are used. False-positive (and true-negative) results are more likely to occur when the disease prevalence in the community is low, which is generally at the beginning and end of the influenza season and during the summer.

**State Laboratories Administration Influenza Testing**

The MDH Laboratories Administration performed a total of 178 PCR tests for influenza and 84 (47.2%) were positive for influenza. Of those testing positive, 14 (16.7%) were positive for Type A (H3), 11 (13.1%) were positive for Type A (H1), 54 (64.3%) were positive for Type B (Yamagata), 4 (4.8%) were positive for Type B (Victoria), and there was 1 (1.2%) that was positive for dual Type A (H1/H3). PCR testing is more reliable than RIDT. The MDH testing identifies subtypes of influenza A and lineages of influenza B, information that is not available from the RIDT results. The table below summarizes results by type, subtype, and lineage.
Influenza-associated Hospitalizations
A total of 253 influenza-associated hospitalizations were reported this week. (A person with an overnight hospital stay along with a positive influenza test of any kind, e.g., RIDT or PCR, is considered an “influenza-associated hospitalization” for purposes of influenza surveillance.) This surveillance is conducted as a component of the Maryland Emerging Infections Program.

Influenza-asssociated Deaths
An influenza-associated death is one with a clinically compatible illness and a positive influenza test of any kind.

Pediatric Deaths: The total number of pediatric (< 18 years of age) deaths reported this influenza season is 1.
Influenza-associated pediatric mortality is a reportable condition in Maryland. Pediatric deaths are tracked without regard to hospitalization.
Adult Deaths Among Hospitalized Patients: A total of 46 deaths have been reported among adults admitted to Maryland hospitals this influenza season.
Influenza-associated adult mortality is not a reportable condition in Maryland. However, adult mortality surveillance is conducted as a component of the Maryland Emerging Infections Program’s influenza-associated hospitalization surveillance).

Outbreaks of Respiratory Disease
There were seven respiratory outbreaks reported to MDH this week. (Disease outbreaks of any kind are reportable in Maryland. Respiratory outbreaks may be reclassified once a causative agent is detected, e.g., from ILI to influenza.)
National Influenza Surveillance (CDC)
During week 8 (February 18-24, 2018), influenza activity decreased in the United States.

- **Viral Surveillance:** While influenza A(H3) viruses continue to be predominant this season, during week 8 the overall proportion of influenza A viruses is declining and the proportion of influenza B viruses is increasing. The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for influenza in clinical laboratories decreased.

- **Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality:** The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was above the system-specific epidemic threshold in the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) Mortality Surveillance System.

- **Influenza-associated Pediatric Deaths:** Seventeen influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported.

- **Influenza-associated Hospitalizations:** A cumulative rate of 81.7 laboratory-confirmed influenza-associated hospitalizations per 100,000 population was reported.

- **Outpatient Illness Surveillance:** The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 5.0%, which is above the national baseline of 2.2%.
  All 10 regions reported ILI at or above region-specific baseline levels. New York City, the District of Columbia, and 32 states experienced high ILI activity; Puerto Rico and nine states experienced moderate ILI activity; six states experienced low ILI activity; and three states experienced minimal ILI activity.

- **Geographic Spread of Influenza:** The geographic spread of influenza in Puerto Rico and 45 states was reported as widespread; Guam and two states reported regional activity; the District of Columbia and three states reported local activity; and the U.S. Virgin Islands reported no activity.

Where to get an influenza vaccination
Interested in getting a flu vaccine for the 2017-18 influenza season? Go to [https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/influenza/Pages/getvaccinated.aspx](https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/influenza/Pages/getvaccinated.aspx) and click on your county/city of residence. You will be redirected to your local health department website for local information on where to get your flu vaccine.