

Laboratory surveillance

Throughout the influenza season, the UHL solicits specimens from hospitals, reference and clinical laboratories. UHL conducts confirmatory testing for the purpose of surveillance. Specimens are sometimes submitted for confirmation of rapid antigen results.

UHL also runs a web-based survey program where laboratorians report the number of influenza and Respiratory Syncytial virus (RSV) rapid antigen tests performed and positive, weekly.

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

Mortality surveillance

This program is limited to review of all deaths occurring in Polk County through the 122 Cities Mortality Reporting System, a CDC program carried out by IDPH.

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 Kemi Oni at oluwakemi.oni@idph.iowa.gov or by phone at 515-725-2136.

Resources

Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network
www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/iisn.asp

University Hygienic Laboratory
Influenza testing information
www.uhl.uiowa.edu/services/influenza

Program Contacts

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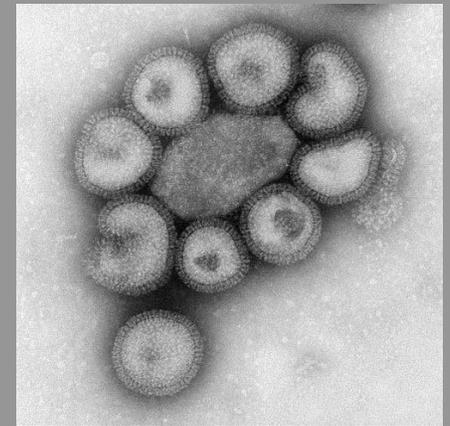
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Iowa Influenza Surveillance Network

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology
Iowa Department of Public Health

Gerd W. Clabaugh, MPA.
Director



Terry E. Branstad
Governor

Kim Reynolds
Lt. Governor

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

In 2000, the IISN was sustained with one part-time epidemiology position and surveillance was conducted October-March. Currently, the program functions with support from three grants: the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity grant, Advancing Strategies to Improve Influenza Surveillance in Hospitals grant, and the Influenza Incidence Pilot project.

The 2009-2010 operating budget exceeds \$400,000 and involves full-time epidemiology and laboratory staff. Surveillance is conducted year-round.

IISN goals

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

Outpatient health care provider surveillance (ILINet)

ILINet is a [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) program that is supported by influenza coordinators in every state. Outpatient health care providers that routinely see patients with influenza-like illness (ILI) participate in this program.



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

- Number of patients seen by age group (0-4, 5-24, 25-49, 50-64, and >64 years)
- Number of patients seen with ILI by age group (same as above)

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

ILINet incentives

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

School-based surveillance

IDPH tracks more than 30,000 students weekly for absence due to illness. 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
- Number of days school was in session

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.

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.

Prior to the start of the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, Iowa agreed to participate in the [Emerging Infectious Disease Program](#). One of only 16 states in the program, Iowa collects detailed information on patients hospitalized for flu-related conditions.

Program requirements are the following:

- Reporting of inpatients with a diagnosis of influenza and/or related condition (e.g. pneumonia)
- Laboratory confirmation of influenza within two weeks of admission
- Completing a case report form submitted through the Iowa Disease Surveillance System, fax, or email

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