

# MARYLAND INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE REPORT - Week 49

## (November 30 to December 6, 2008)



Office of Epidemiology and Disease Control Programs | Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

- Influenza activity in Maryland for week 49 was **SPORADIC**, where visits to providers for flu-like illness were below baseline and there have been reports of positive laboratory tests. (PAGE 1)
- No outbreaks of influenza or influenza-like illness were reported this week. One outbreak of pneumonia was reported(PAGE 2)
- It's National Influenza Vaccine Week! (PAGE 4)

**INSIDE:**

<b>Isolates &amp; Outbreaks</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Flu Tracking Survey</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CDC Week 48 Synopsis</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Nat'l Flu Vaccine Week</b>	<b>4</b>

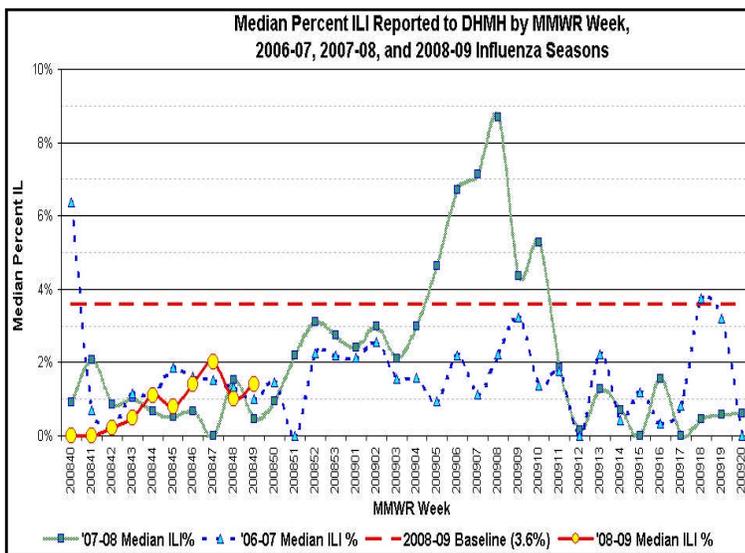
### VISITS TO PROVIDERS FOR INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI)

This week, a total of 33 proportions among providers for ILI were reported by 7 providers. The median ILI is used instead of the average. Half of the ILI reports were below the median and half were above. This is **below** the state baseline of 3.6%.

Sentinel providers are health care providers who report to us the proportion of patient visits for influenza like illness. Because of the great variability in reported ILI

proportions among providers each week, the median ILI is used instead of the average. Half of the ILI reports were below the median and half were above.

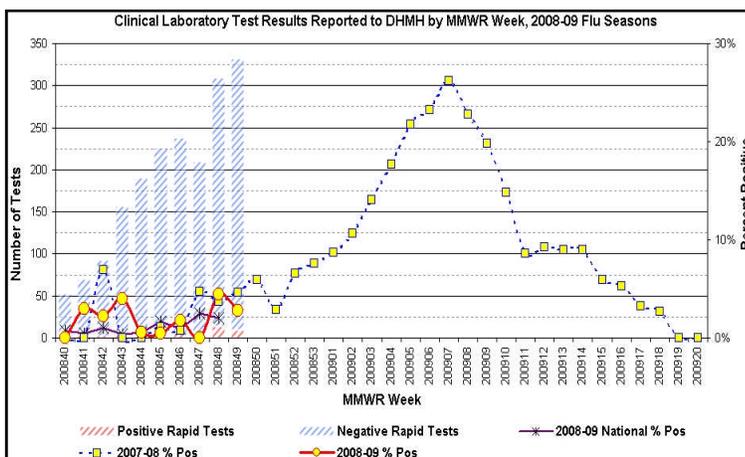
If you are interested in becoming a sentinel provider, please feel free to contact us at [flu@dnhm.state.md](mailto:flu@dnhm.state.md) or by phone at 410-767-6700.



### RAPID INFLUENZA TESTS PERFORMED BY SENTINEL CLINICAL LABORATORIES

This week, a total of 322 flu tests performed before the first DHMH lab-confirmed case are not counted as confirmed cases for the purpose of surveillance. **Now that the DHMH laboratory has confirmed a case by reference methods, all rapid influenza tests will be counted as confirmed cases.**

Because the sensitivity and specificity of rapid flu tests vary with the prevalence of influenza in the population\*, rapid



\* "Rapid Diagnostic Testing for Influenza", Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/diagnosis/rapidclin.htm>

MARYLAND INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE REPORT - Week 49(November 30 to December 6, 2008)

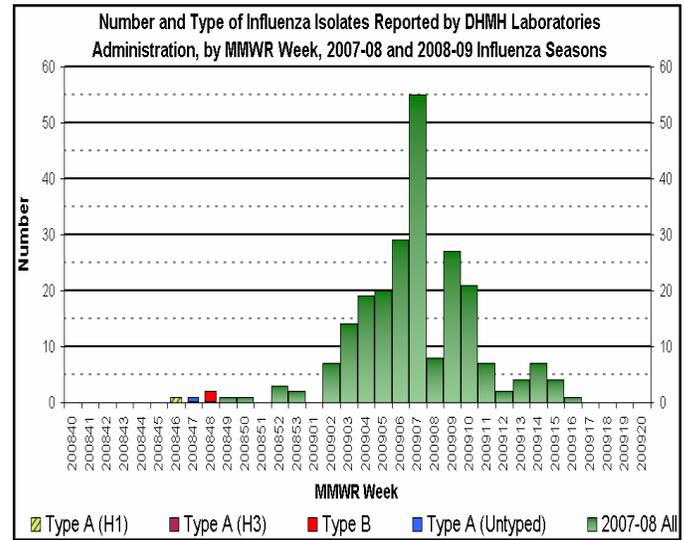
**DHMH STATE LABORATORY ISOLATE TYPING AND SUBTYPING**

To date this season, there have been four lab-confirmed cases of influenza reported by the DHMH laboratory. During the 2007-2008 influenza season, a total of 232 specimens were positive for influenza by PCR and/or viral culture at the DHMH lab.

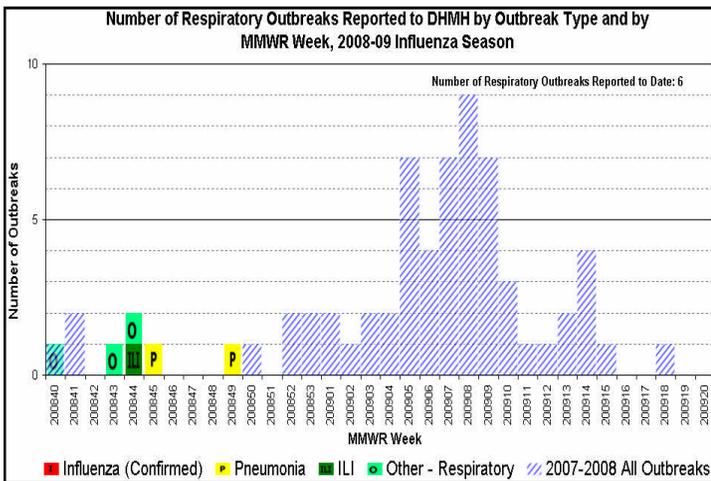
The DHMH Laboratories Administration has reported the first lab-confirmed case of

influenza of the 2008-2009 season. The case is a child living in the Baltimore Metro Region.

A sample of isolates processed at the DHMH public health lab is sent to CDC for further testing, including the determination of the circulating strains and any resistance to antiviral medications.



**INSTITUTIONAL OUTBREAKS REPORTED TO DHMH**



No outbreaks of influenza or influenza-like illness were reported to DHMH this week. One outbreak of pneumonia was reported to DHMH this week.

department to report an outbreak.

For more information about outbreak investigations in Maryland, please visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/edcpoutb>

Although influenza is not a reportable condition in Maryland, outbreaks of influenza in institutional settings are reportable. Please contact your local health

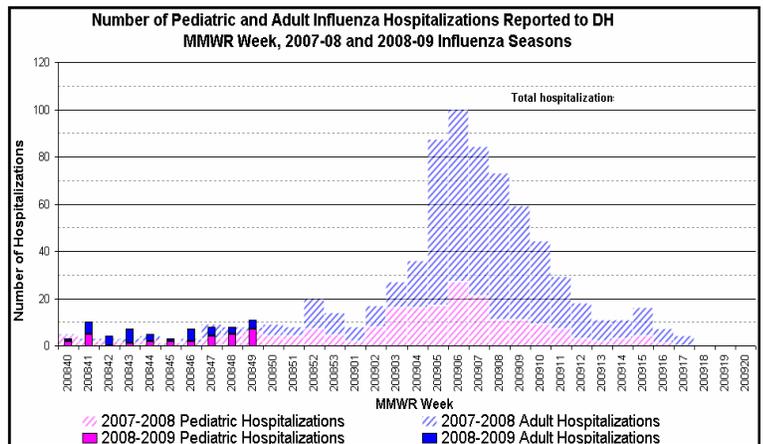
**INFLUENZA HOSPITALIZATIONS REPORTED TO DHMH**

This week, a total of 11 hospitalizations were reported to DHMH. Of these, 4 (36%) were adults (over 18 years of age) and 7 (64%) were children.

To date, there have been 66 (46% pediatric, 54% adult) hospitalizations for influenza reported to DHMH. Last season, 729

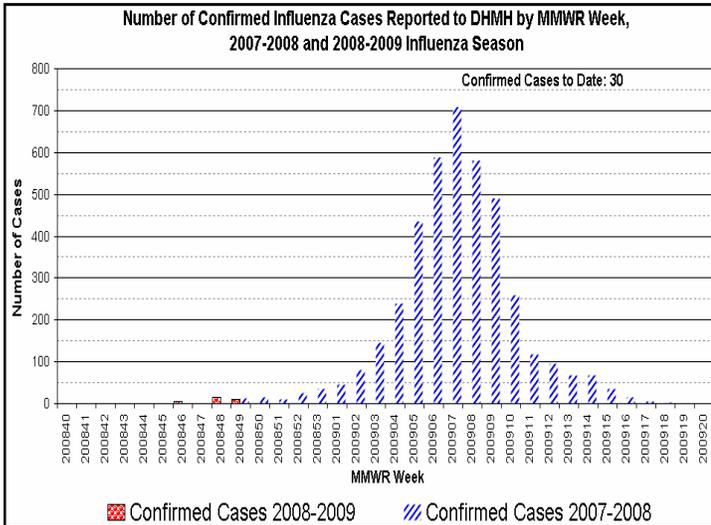
hospitalizations were reported.

The Emerging Infections Program collects information on a weekly basis from several hospitals in the Baltimore Metro Region on the number of hospitalizations associated with influenza.



MARYLAND INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE REPORT - Week 49(November 30 to December 6, 2008)

# MARYLAND LAB-CONFIRMED CASES OF INFLUENZA



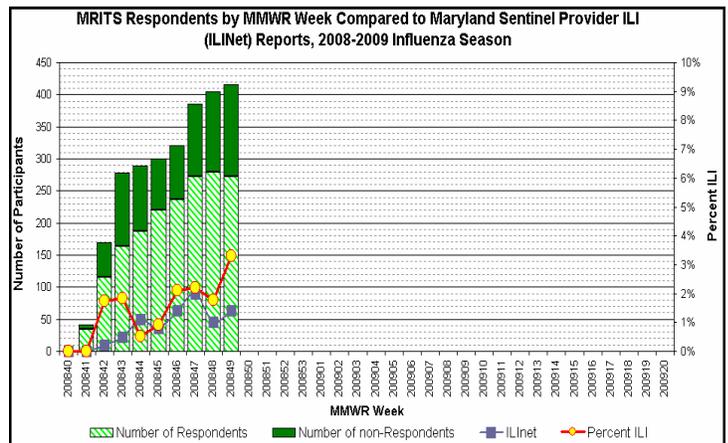
This week, 9 lab-confirmed cases of influenza (from clinical and DHMH laboratories) were reported to DHMH. Our season total is now 30 cases. Last season, we received reports of 4,029 lab-confirmed cases, with the peak number of cases (708) reported for week 7 (February 10-16, 2008).

Cases are not confirmed by rapid flu test until the first influenza isolate is detected at DHMH lab. After that first isolate, all clinical laboratory tests that are positive are counted as confirmed cases of influenza for surveillance purposes.

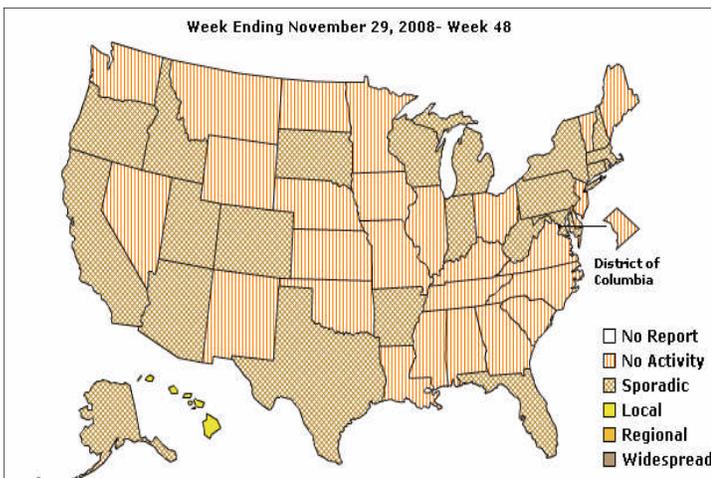
## MARYLAND RESIDENT INFLUENZA TRACKING SURVEY (MRITS)

A total of 419 participants signed up at <http://tinyurl.com/flu-enroll> by the end of week 49. Of the 419 residents who received the weekly survey, 272 (65%) responded to it. Among the respondents, 9 (3.3%) reported flu-like symptoms. A total of 8 (3%) of the respondents reported getting their flu

vaccine this week. Because there is no baseline to compare these results, and the sample size is small (compared to the population), caution must be taken when interpreting the results. We continue to recruit participants. Please enroll at the link above or pass on the link to anyone interested.



## CDC WEEKLY INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE



According to CDC, “during week 47, a low level of influenza activity was reported in the United States.” Visits to sentinel providers are below baseline; One state (Hawaii) reported “local” flu activity; 22 states (including Maryland) and Puerto Rico reported “sporadic” influenza activity (the other states reported “no activity”), and about

2% of specimens tested were positive for influenza. Also, no pediatric deaths due to influenza were reported during week 47. For more information, visit: <http://cdc.gov/flu/weekly>

**HEALTHY PEOPLE HEALTY COMMUNITIES**

**Division of Communicable  
Disease Surveillance |  
Office of Epidemiology and  
Disease Control Programs |  
Maryland Department of Health  
and Mental Hygiene**

201 West Preston Street  
3rd Floor, Unit #26  
Baltimore, MD 21201

Phone: 410-767-6700  
Fax: 410-696-4215  
E-mail: flu@dnhm.state.md.us

All information submitted to DHMH through the surveillance systems is voluntary. This information is used to estimate the geographic extent of flu activity, and not the virulence or pathogenicity of circulating viruses. This information is not intended for individual diagnoses.

**ALL INFORMATION IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS MORE DATA IS SUBMITTED AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF THIS REPORT**

If you have any questions about influenza surveillance in Maryland, or you would like to join our Influenza Sentinel Provider Network, please contact Rene F. Najera, MPH, Epidemiologist at the Division of Communicable Disease Surveillance in the Office of Epidemiology and Disease Control Programs.

**WE'RE ON THE WEB!!!**

[WWW.EDCP.ORG](http://WWW.EDCP.ORG)

**National Influenza Vaccination Week (12/8-12/14)**

This week is National Influenza Vaccination Week, when public health authorities in the United States work together to get the word out about the importance of flu vaccination. Plenty of educational materials are available at the CDC website (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/nivw>). A combination of education and social marketing can go a long way to getting flu immunization numbers up. Just ask the University of Minnesota.

Each year, on average, 36,000 people in the United States die from complications from the flu, and over 200,000 are hospitalized because of

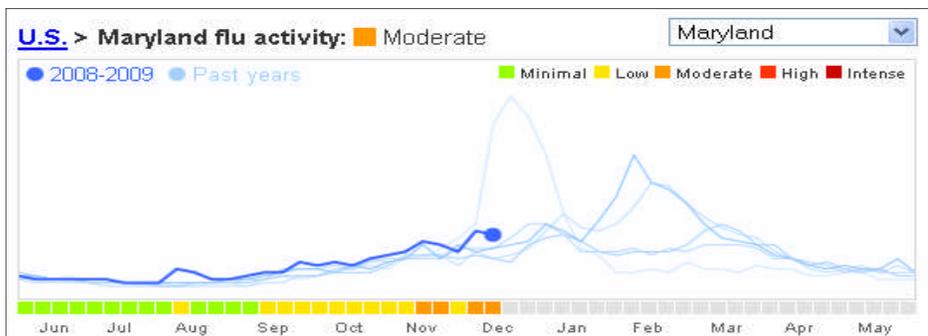
the flu. The proportion of people who get the flu in a regular season is between 5% and 20%, and it may be as high as 35% in the event of a pandemic.

While there are antiviral medications that can deal with the flu, the best way to avoid getting the flu is still the flu vaccine (or you could move to a deserted island). In the arm, or up your nose, the flu vaccine is worth the inconvenience of waiting in line for it. In fact, long lines are a good thing because they indicate that plenty of people are being vaccinated against influenza.

The previous world record for the

number of flu vaccines administered in one day was 3,271, set in November 2006 by a hospital in Florida. The new record now belongs to the University of Minnesota, where 11,538 people received their flu vaccine on October 28, 2008 (<http://tinyurl.com/fluminn>). And you thought your doctor's office was crowded!

So, if you are otherwise healthy and have no restrictions to getting the flu vaccine but have not done so, please go and get yours this week. Challenge a friend, co-worker, or family member to join you, too. It takes about two weeks for immunity to kick in, and we're just starting the flu season.



Google Flu Trends (<http://www.google.org/flutrends>): According to Google, flu activity in Maryland is "Moderate".



Be an example. (Image courtesy of CDC - PHIL)