

Influenza Levels Elevated

Influenza activity in Los Angeles County (LAC) increased to widespread levels, increasing earlier than previous seasons (Figure 1). During week 51 ending December 24, 19.1% of all respiratory specimens collected from our local sentinel sites tested positive for influenza (Table 1, Figure 1). Similar overall increased levels are occurring nationwide with elevated activity reported across most states including California (Figure 2). While current activity is elevated, there is typically a lag in the severe consequences from influenza, and hospitalizations and deaths usually do not occur until later in the season. At this time last year, influenza activity in LAC was lower—only 3.7% of respiratory specimens tested positive—yet influenza activity peaked mid-February and [ultimately caused 70 confirmed deaths including 3 pediatric fatalities](#). Because influenza typically peaks in January and February and can linger well into the spring, vaccination is still highly recommended. The LAC Department of Public Health urges everyone older than 6 months of age and without contraindications to be vaccinated annually. The benefits of vaccination are substantial—during last season, the CDC estimates [5 million cases of influenza and 71,000 hospitalizations were prevented](#) as a result of vaccination.

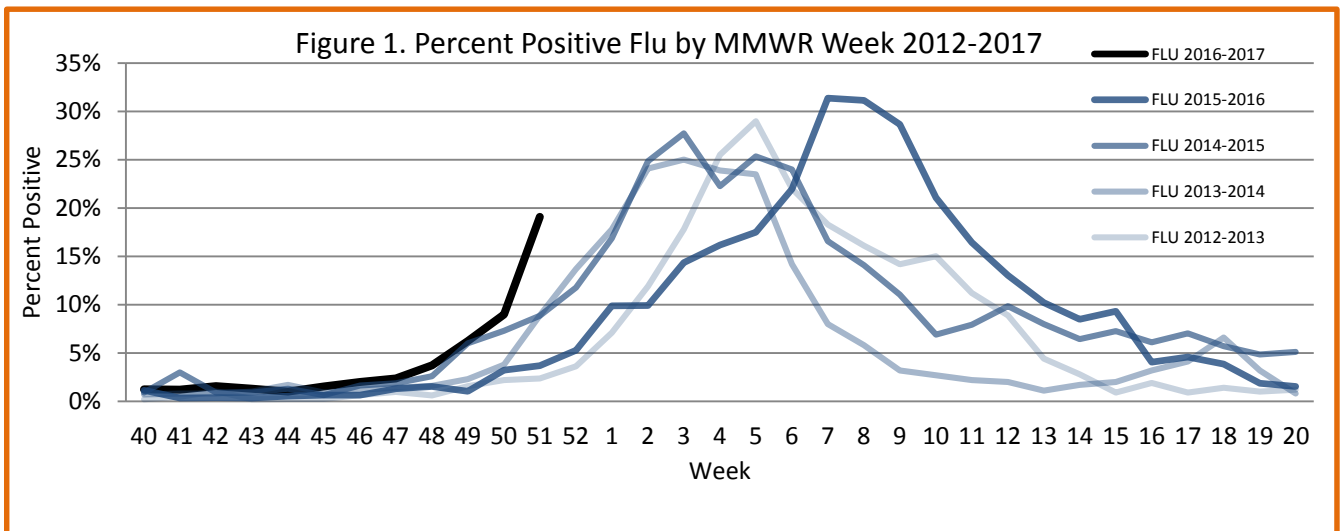


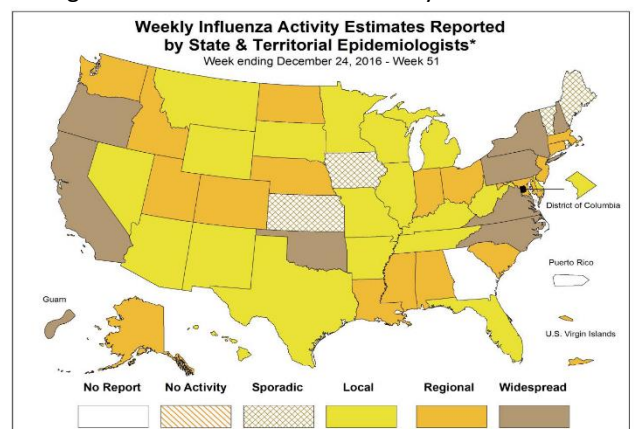
Figure 2. Week 51 Influenza Activity Estimates

Table 1. Los Angeles County Influenza Surveillance Summary				
	2016-2017		2015-2016	
	Week 51*	YTD [†]	Week 51	YTD
Positive Flu Tests/Total Tests (Percent Positive Flu Tests)	339/1776 (19.1%)	826/19,679 (4.2%)	47/1276 (3.7%)	210/16,134 (1.3%)
Percent Flu A/B	99/1	97/3	57/43	73/27
Community Respiratory Outbreaks	0	2	0	7
Influenza Confirmed Outbreaks	0	0	0	0
Pediatric Flu Deaths‡	0	0	0	0
Adult Flu Deaths	0	1	2	2

*For the 2016-2017 season, week 51 extends from 12/18/16 to 12/24/16.

†The influenza surveillance year started August 28, 2016.

‡Confirmed influenza death is defined by a positive lab test, ILI symptoms, and clear progression from illness to death.



* This map indicates geographic spread & does not measure the severity of influenza activity