

Influenza Watch – San Diego County, California

2005-06 Influenza Season Summary

San Diego County had a moderate 2005-06 influenza season, similar to State-wide influenza trends observed in California. Influenza activity in San Diego was characterized predominantly by a peak of influenza A detections reported during the last 3 weeks of December, 2005, and then a small secondary wave of influenza B detections reported from February – April, 2006 (Figure 1). Influenza-like-illness at emergency departments also peaked during the last 2 weeks of 2005, at 10% of all visits (Figure 2). School absenteeism rates showed similar trends leading up to the end of the year, however, most schools were out of session during the final weeks of 2005. Pre-hospital transports for respiratory distress and influenza-like-illness also peaked during weeks 51 & 52 of 2005.

The San Diego County Public Health Laboratory (PHL) received over 1,100 reports of influenza detections from providers throughout San Diego County during the season, and confirmed and characterized influenza A and influenza B isolates received. Of the 68 influenza A isolates characterized by PHL, all were antigenically identified as the H3N2 subtype. Ten influenza A(H3N2) isolates were strain typed by the State Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory (VRDL) as A/California/07/2004-like, and one was identified as A/Wisconsin/67/2005-like (a new antigenic variant of the A/California/07/2004 strain). Both strains were antigenically well matched to the 2005-06 vaccine strain. Of the 22 influenza B isolates antigenically characterized, 6 belonged to the B/Victorian-like family, and one was strain typed as B/Shanghai/361/2002-like. During the summer months of 2006, PHL also identified two influenza A(H1N1) subtypes associated with foreign travel to Asia. These influenza A(H1N1) isolates are still being strain typed to date.

Figure 1. Influenza Detections Reported to PHL, by Type and Week of Report, 2005-06

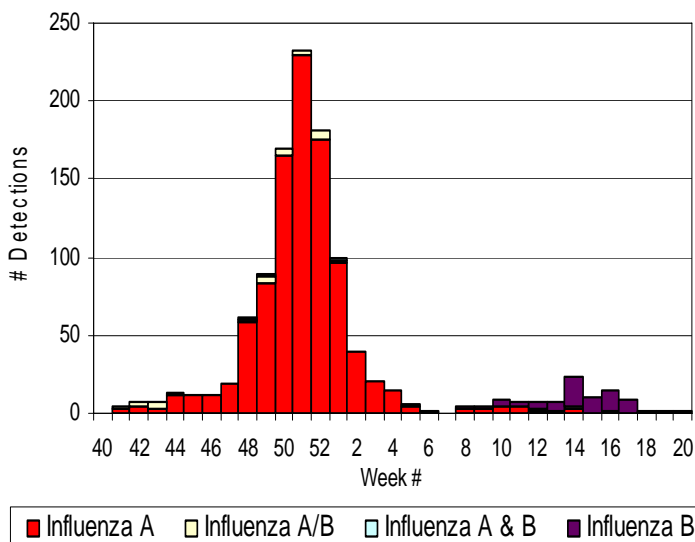
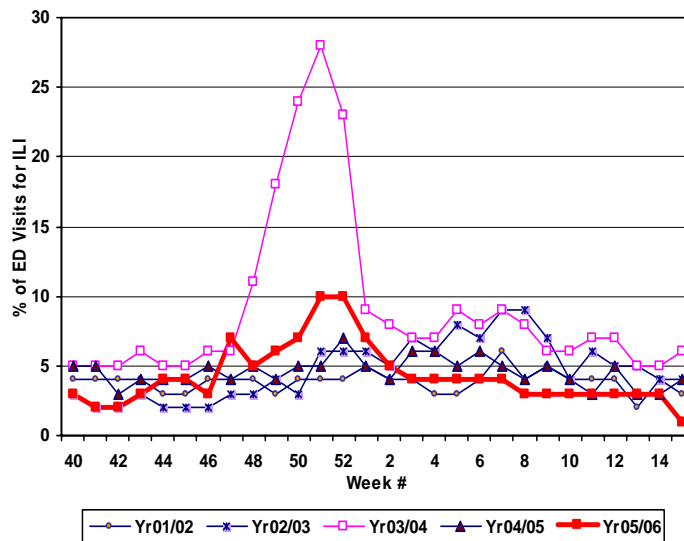


Figure 2. Percent of ED Visits for ILI, by Week, 2005-06 and 4 Prior Seasons



Upcoming 2006-07 Season Recommendations

The recommended 2005-06 trivalent vaccine virus strains include A/Wisconsin/67/2005 (H3N2)-like, A/New Caledonia/20/1999 (H1N1)-like, and B/Malaysia/2506/2004-like antigens. CDC vaccination recommendation updates for the 2006-07 season include children aged 24-59 months (in addition to all previously identified target groups), as well as new recommendations for the delayed use of amantadine or rimantadine antiviral therapies for treatment or chemoprophylaxis until susceptibility of circulating seasonal influenza A strains can be assessed.

Ongoing Surveillance for Acute Respiratory Illnesses

Influenza surveillance in San Diego County continues year-round. Physicians and laboratories are encouraged to participate by reporting positive influenza detections to the Public Health Laboratory by phone (619-692-8500) or fax (619-692-8558).

For more information regarding influenza surveillance in SD County, please contact Community Epidemiology at: EpiDiv.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov or (619) 515-6620.