

Influenza Conference Call – Overview and Q&A (10/8/2015)

International influenza update

- In the Northern Hemisphere, influenza activity continued at low, inter-seasonal levels with sporadic detections. Increased respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity was reported in the United States of America (USA).
- Few influenza detections were reported by countries in Africa. In Eastern Africa, in countries with reported influenza activity, influenza type A viruses predominated. In Western Africa, influenza activity decreased overall.
- In tropical countries of the Americas, Central America and the Caribbean, influenza activity remained at low levels, with the exception of Cuba, where high numbers of severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) were still reported, associated with influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 virus and RSV. Colombia experienced slightly elevated acute respiratory activity (ARI) in recent weeks with elevated RSV activity.
- In tropical Asia, countries in Southern and South East Asia reported low influenza activity overall except in India and Lao People's Democratic Republic where increased activity mainly due to A(H1N1)pdm09 virus in India and A(H3N2) virus in Lao PDR continued to be reported. Influenza activity declined in southern China.
- In temperate South America, respiratory virus activity decreased or remained low in general. However, ILI activity remained elevated in Chile with increasing influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 detections.
- In South Africa, influenza activity remained at low levels with influenza type B viruses predominating in recent weeks.
- In Australia, influenza activity in general seemed to be past the peak except in South Australia where it continued to rise with predominantly influenza B virus followed by influenza A(H3N2) virus detections. In New Zealand, influenza activity may have peaked in the second week of August with influenza A(H3N2) and B viruses predominating during the season. ILI activity was still above the seasonal threshold but below the alert threshold.
- New Hampshire has already reported several PCR confirmed cases of influenza A.
- Maine CDC has received several rapid positive tests reports, and had the first PCR positive confirmed case reported today.

Non-seasonal influenza

- Avian influenza (H5N1) continues to be reported sporadically – mostly in Egypt, no new cases identified since July
- H7N9 continues to be a risk in travelers to China, no new cases identified since July
- Influenza A(H9N2) detected in a child from Bangladesh
- Two cases of H3N2v viruses detected in the US this summer – associated with fair exposures (MN and MI). Maine has not seen any H3N2v since 2011 but the risk remains
- Various influenza A(H5) subtypes, such as influenza A(H5N1), A(H5N2), A(H5N3), A(H5N6) and A(H5N8), continue to be detected in birds in West Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. Although these influenza A(H5) viruses might have the potential to cause disease in humans, so far no human cases of infection have been reported, with exception of the human infections with influenza A(H5N1) viruses and the four human infections with influenza A(H5N6) virus detected in China since 2014.

Avian influenza

- US experienced an outbreak of avian influenza during the first half of 2015
 - 21 states had HPAI detections
 - 49.6 million commercial birds were affected
 - 7.5 million turkeys
 - 42.1 million chickens
- No detections since June, but is possible to see new detections through the fall and winter
- No human cases

Questions

- Vaccine related questions
 - Does Maine CDC has a recommendation for using high dose vaccine for those who are eligible?

- No – Maine CDC does not recommend one vaccine over another for this age group
- If a 19 yo attends a school located vaccine clinic will they get free vaccine from Maine CDC?
 - No – Maine CDC supplied vaccine is for pediatric patients only
- Lab related questions
 - Does HETL only want the first 10 rapid positive, or do they want PCR positive too?
 - HETL wants the first 10 positive from each hospital/facility regardless of the testing type
 - What media is needed to transport samples to HETL?
 - Viral transport media
- Tamiflu questions
 - Does Maine CDC have a recommendation for Tamiflu dosing for individuals with kidney complications?
 - No – Maine CDC recommends following the package insert guidelines

Conclusion

- Please feel free to use disease.reporting@maine.gov to ask any questions we may not have answered
- We will have future calls as needed, they will be announced the same way this call was