

Preliminary Influenza

Report, 1998-99

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The first case of laboratory confirmed influenza in Nebraska was reported to the Douglas County Health Department in mid December. Throughout the month of December and into January, reported influenza cases increased gradually. Early in the season, influenza type B was the predominant type reported, but influenza type A started to circulate in early January and by the first week of February was the predominant strain reported. The number of reported cases increased significantly the first two weeks in February, and this trend has continued through the end of February. During the last week of February, influenza type A comprised 80% of all reported cases and influenza type B comprised 20%.

These trends closely parallel what has been seen on a national basis. Influenza activity has continued to increase through February 20th across the U.S. Nationally, 78% of the influenza viruses identified this season were influenza type A and, 22% were type B. Although influenza type A has predominated this season, influenza type B has predominated in some regions during specific periods. Twenty five percent of the type A isolates have been subtyped, and 99% were A(H3N2) and 1% were A(H1N1). Influenza A(H1N1) viruses have been reported from Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, Texas, and Wisconsin. According to the CDC, all of the influenza A(H3N2) viruses characterized have been similar to A/Sydney/5197, the H3N2 component of the 1998-99 influenza vaccine. The H1N1 isolates were antigenically characterized as A/Bayern/7/95-like. A/Bayern/7/95-like is antigenically distinct from A/Beijing/262/95, the H1N1 vaccine strain, but the vaccine strain produces high titers of antibodies that cross react with A/Bayern/7/95-like viruses. All of the influenza B viruses antigenically characterized by the CDC are similar to B/Beijing/184/93, the type B vaccine strain. Studies are in progress to subtype selected isolates from Douglas Co. with special interest in identifying cases of influenza A in individuals who were vaccinated.

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Laboratory Confirmed Influenza Reported to the Douglas County Health Department by Week of Report

Weekending:	Influenza B	Influenza A	Total
December 12, 1998	1	0	1
December 19, 1998	0	0	0
December 26, 1998	2	0	2
January 2, 1999	4	1	5
January 9, 1999	1	1	2
January 13, 1999	8	2	10
January 20, 1999	4	6	10
January 27, 1999	6	5	11
February 6, 1999	6	15	21
February 13, 1999	11	23	34
February 19, 1999	15	38	53
February 26, 1999	10	39	49
Total	68	130	198