



Department of Health

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

MARY T. BASSETT, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner

KRISTIN M. PROUD
Acting Executive Deputy Commissioner

May 18, 2022

TO: New York State Public and Private Schools

FROM: NYSDOH Division of Epidemiology

HEALTH ADVISORY: ELEVATED INFLUENZA ACTIVITY IN NEW YORK STATE

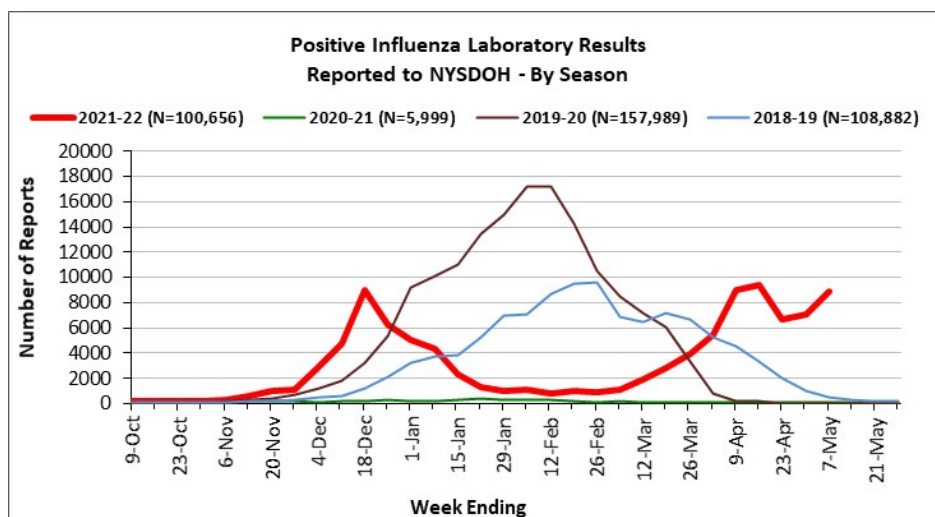
PURPOSE

In view of persisting elevated influenza activity in New York State (NYS), this advisory provides updated influenza surveillance information along with links and references to influenza prevention and control resources.

INFLUENZA SURVEILLANCE SUMMARY

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) conducts influenza surveillance each October through May and may extend surveillance beyond May if needed. Influenza is unpredictable and remains elevated and widespread in New York State. It is not uncommon for influenza activity to extend into the late spring.

Surveillance data has shown an unusual bimodal distribution of influenza activity during the 2021-22 season. Following consistent declines during January and low rates in February, laboratory-confirmed influenza cases and hospitalizations have been steadily rising since March with significant increases in lab-confirmed cases occurring throughout April. It is unknown if activity will remain at high levels or continue to increase in the upcoming weeks.



Surveillance data indicate that influenza A(H3) has been the predominant influenza virus circulating this season, accounting for 90% of all influenza cases reported last week. While influenza viruses can cause severe illness in people of all ages, influenza A(H3) viruses are known to cause disproportionately more illness among young children and older adults. Since the start of the season, 100,656 laboratory-confirmed influenza cases and more than 5,600 hospitalizations have been reported, with 59% of all laboratory-confirmed cases occurring in persons aged 0–17 years and 42% of hospitalizations in persons aged 65 and older. During the week ending May 7, 2022, a total of 8,885 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza were reported in 56 of 57 New York State counties and in all five boroughs of New York City.

NYSDOH would like to remind schools to contact their local health department (LHD) if they observe increases in school absences resulting from influenza-like illness (fever with cough or sore throat) or confirmed influenza outbreaks. The following preventive measures should be encouraged to stop the spread of influenza within your school:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- NYSDOH Influenza Guidance:
<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/seasonal/>
https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/seasonal/child_care_and_schools/
- NYSDOH Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report:
<http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/surveillance/>.
- NYSDOH 2021-22 Annual Influenza Surveillance and Reporting Requirement Advisory can be found at: https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/docs/influenza_health_advisory.pdf
- New York State Center for School Health - Communicable Disease:
<https://www.schoolhealthny.com/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=187&ViewID=7b97f7ed-8e5e-4120-848f-a8b4987d588f&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=93&PageID=115>
- CDC - Information for Schools & Childcare Providers: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/index.htm>
- Contact information for Local Health Departments can be found at:
<https://www.nyscho.org/directory/>