



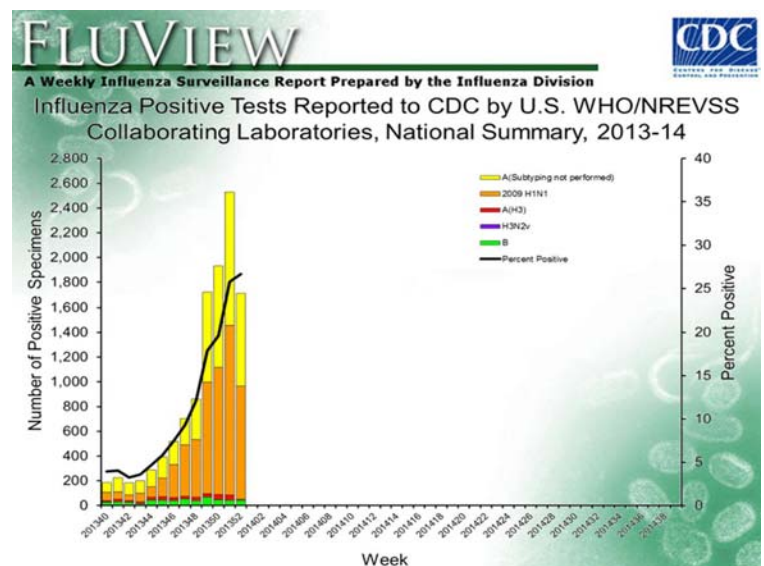
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**Orange County reports its first influenza-associated fatality this season. Flu activity is widespread in several states, and is increasing in Orange County.** It's not too late to get vaccinated! For vaccine locations, visit [www.ochealthinfo.com/flu](http://www.ochealthinfo.com/flu).

- **Orange County has received its first report this season of an influenza-associated death in a person less than 65 years of age.** The patient, in her 20s, tested positive for influenza A 2009 H1N1, and had underlying conditions that may have increased her risk for complications from influenza. Initiation of antiviral treatment as early as possible is recommended for patients with suspect influenza who are hospitalized, have severe, complicated or progressive illness, or who are at increased risk of complications from influenza. Decisions about starting antiviral treatment should not wait for laboratory confirmation.
- **Several states have received reports of severe infection associated with influenza A 2009 H1N1,** which is currently the predominant strain in the US. The CDC has issued a Health Alert Network (HAN) discussing these recent reports and outlining recommendations for use of influenza antiviral medications: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/HAN/han00359.asp>. CDPH also issued an advisory this week with recommendations for use of antivirals, including in the critically ill: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Documents/CDPHAdvisorySevereInfluenzaH1N1.pdf>.
- **Study outlines the impact of rapid influenza testing on clinical care in the emergency department:** The study published in the *Journal of the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society* suggests that rapid influenza diagnostic tests (RIDTs) may reduce ancillary testing and antibiotic prescribing, and increase the use of antivirals. Despite the limited sensitivity of currently available rapid tests, which miss a number of true cases, positive RIDTs may aid in clinical decision making. *See JPIDS 2013 Nov 13:* <http://jpids.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2013/10/31/jpids.pit071.abstract>.

### Seasonal Influenza Update- Week 52 (ending Dec. 28)

- In the **US**, flu activity continues to climb, with several states reporting widespread activity. High levels of flu activity are still being reported in the South Central and Southeastern states. Other parts of the country are noticing increases in flu activity, and additional increases are expected across the US in the coming weeks.
- In **California**, influenza activity was upgraded to regional during Week 52.
- In **Orange County**, outpatient visits for influenza-like illness increased to 3.2% during Week 52. So far this season, 8 severe flu cases (ICU admission or death) have been reported.



### Orange County Hospitals/Laboratories

- Please continue to submit reports on influenza positive specimens to Orange County Public Health Epidemiology and specimens to the Orange County Public Health Laboratory.
- Please report severe cases of influenza (deaths/ICU admissions) in persons less than 65 years of age to OC Epidemiology (fax: 714-834-8186).

If you have any comments about this flyer, contact Sandra Okubo, MPH or Michele Cheung, MD at (714) 834-8180. To receive this newsletter by email, please contact us at [epi@ochca.com](mailto:epi@ochca.com).