

Influenza Surveillance Report

Week ending December 1, 2012 (Week 48)



Houston Department of Health and Human Services

Highlights

Consistent with the national trend, the Houston Department of Health and Human Services (HDHHS) has seen an increase in flu activity earlier than anticipated. This trend is confirmed with our four surveillance systems: syndromic, laboratory, passive, and school.

- Emergency department (ED) visits due to influenza-like illness (ILI) symptoms (fever $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$ and cough or sore throat) have been increasing since the month of November.
- Laboratory surveillance demonstrates an increase in flu positive specimens.
- Passive surveillance indicates an increase in ILI visits to private providers.
- School surveillance also indicates a slight rise in absences among school-age children.

Syndromic Surveillance System

- During week 47 of 2012 (Nov 18-24, 2012), there was a 2.48% increase in ILI-related ED visits as compared to week 47 of 2011, which corresponds to an increase of more than 1300 ILI visits. This spike in ILI visits accounted for 3.0% of all ED visits.
- The majority of ILI visits came from those in the 0-9 years age range.
- During the same time, there was an increase in flu positive specimens, with over 40% of all flu specimens submitted to COH Laboratory Services being positive.

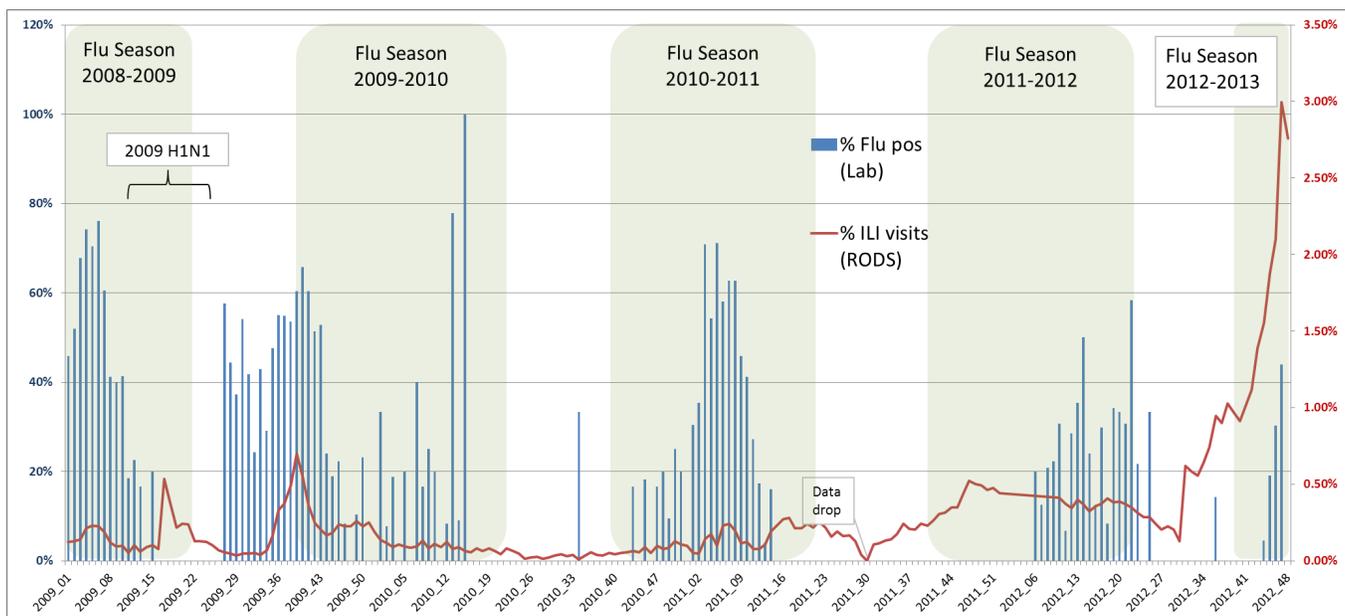
Age (in yrs)	n	%
00-09	4916	60.65%
10-19	754	9.30%
20-29	678	8.37%
30-39	567	7.00%
40-49	385	4.75%
50-59	308	3.80%
60-69	220	2.71%
70-79	150	1.85%
80-89	103	1.27%
90-99	24	0.30%
Total:	8105	

Notes:

*Influenza-like illness (ILI is defined as the mention of fever AND cough, OR fever AND sore throat, OR flu in the patient's ED chief complaint.

Disclaimers:

These data do not represent laboratory confirmed cases of influenza. These data do not represent all ED visits in Houston.



HDHHS Influenza Surveillance Report (12/1/12, Week 48)

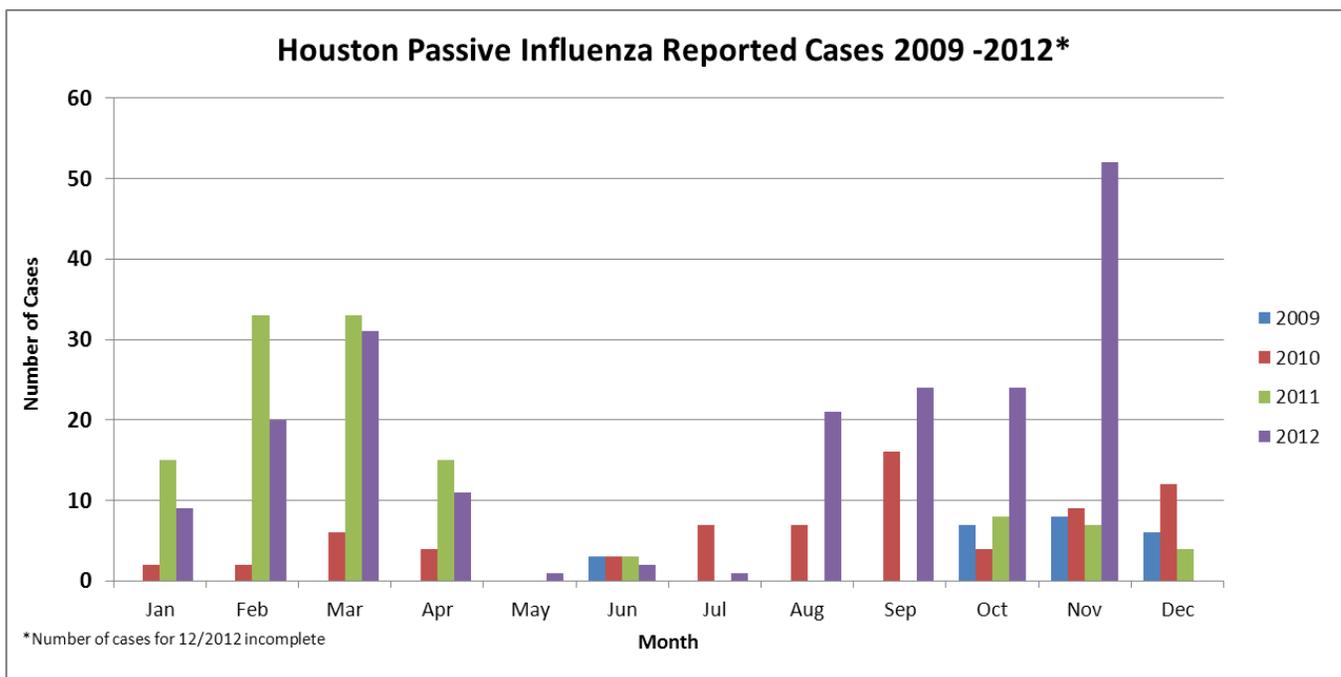
Influenza Passive Surveillance (August 1, 2012—November 30, 2012)

- Passive Surveillance began August 1, 2012.
- An increase in both probable and confirmed influenza cases have been observed each month. The majority of flu cases (13/17=76.5%) is unclassified, followed by type A (3/17=17.6%). There is one case with both flu A+B .

Table 1: ILI and Influenza Cases by Type and by Month

	Total Cases	Lab Confirmed	Percentage of Confirmed Cases	Flu A	Flu B	A+B	Unclassified
August	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
September	32	0	0	0	0	0	0
October	49	5	2.45%	0	0	1	4
November	81	12	9.72%	3	0	0	9
Total	163	17	10.43%	3	0	1	13

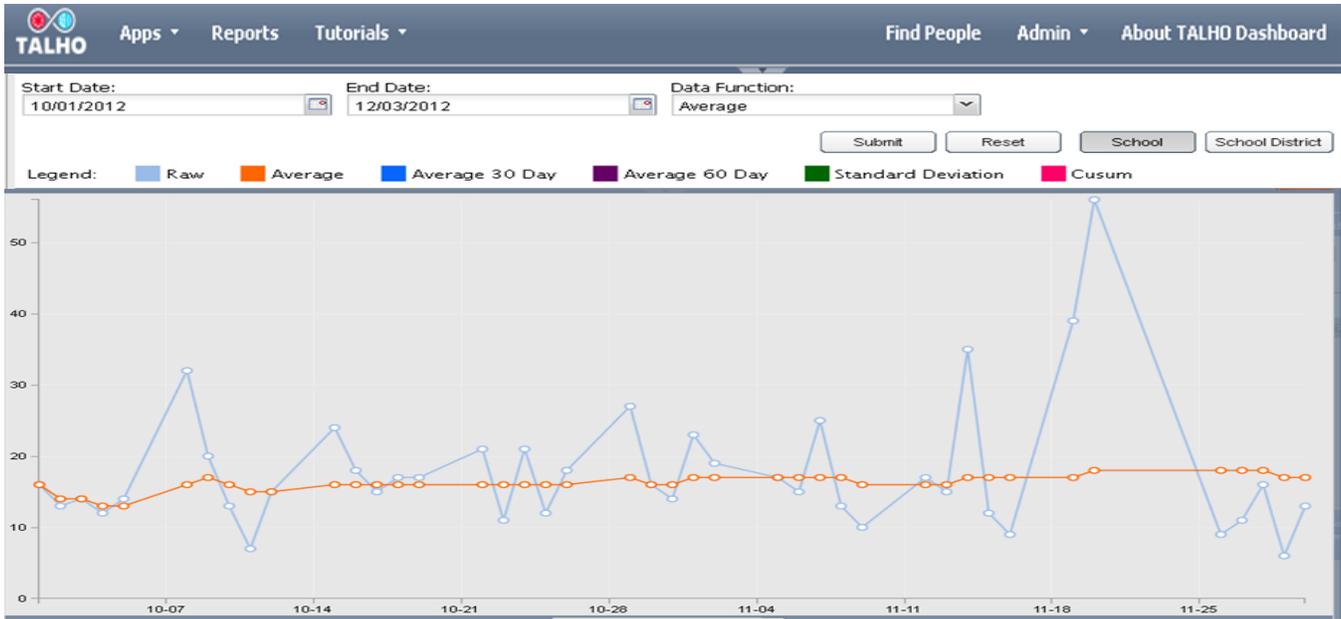
- The number of cases reported in October of 2012 is 37% or more than in previous years 2009 – 2011. For the month of November 2012 it is 57% and greater than in the three prior years (2009 – 2011). Tabulations for the month of December 2012 are not yet complete.



HDHHS Influenza Surveillance Report (12/1/12, Week 48)

School Surveillance

- The average daily absenteeism for HISD elementary schools has increased from 2.7% to 3.0% from October 2012 to December 2012.
- The single spike occurring during the week of Thanksgiving is most likely attributed to the already shortened school week and the fact that some students travelled early during the holiday season.



- So far, 163 schools in HISD are reporting ILI. Elementary schools have reported the majority of cases (90/163=55.2%) followed by multi-level schools (60/163=36.8%).

Table 2: ILI and Influenza Cases by School Type and by Month

	Elementary Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools	Multi-Level Schools
August	0	0	0	1
September	18	0	0	14
October	32	1	1	15
November	40	8	3	30
Total	90	9	4	60

Conclusion

- In conclusion, all four of HDHHS surveillance systems confirm that current influenza activity is higher than expected, which is consistent with the national trend.
- Syndromic surveillance data indicate a drop in influenza activity at the end of week 48; however, this does not suggest a decrease in influenza activity as the typical peak for Houston occurs in February.