

Influenza Surveillance Report

Division of Disease Prevention and Control

Public Health Informatics

CDC MMWR Week 21:

May 17, 2020 to May 23, 2020

Influenza Activity by County, State, and National Levels

Houston/ Harris County:

Texas:

CDC:

Decreased

Highlights

- The Houston Health Department (HHD) conducts seasonal influenza surveillance from October (week 40) to May (week 22). In week 21, the percentage of reported influenza-like illnesses (ILI) detected in emergency centers in Houston/Harris County was **0.35%** which **decreased** from the previous week. The flu vaccine is recommended for the entire season.

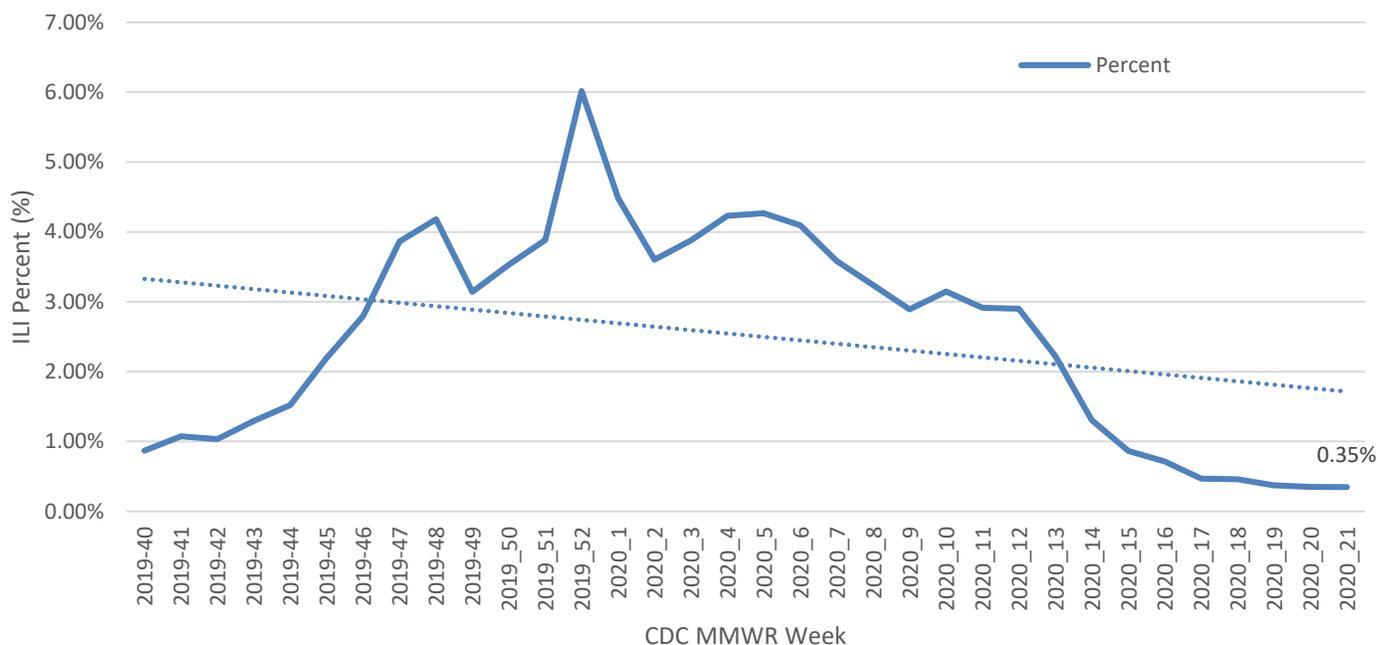
Influenza Like Illness (ILI)

- The percentage of Athena ILI reports **decreased** to 0.36% in week 9 compared to the previous week*.

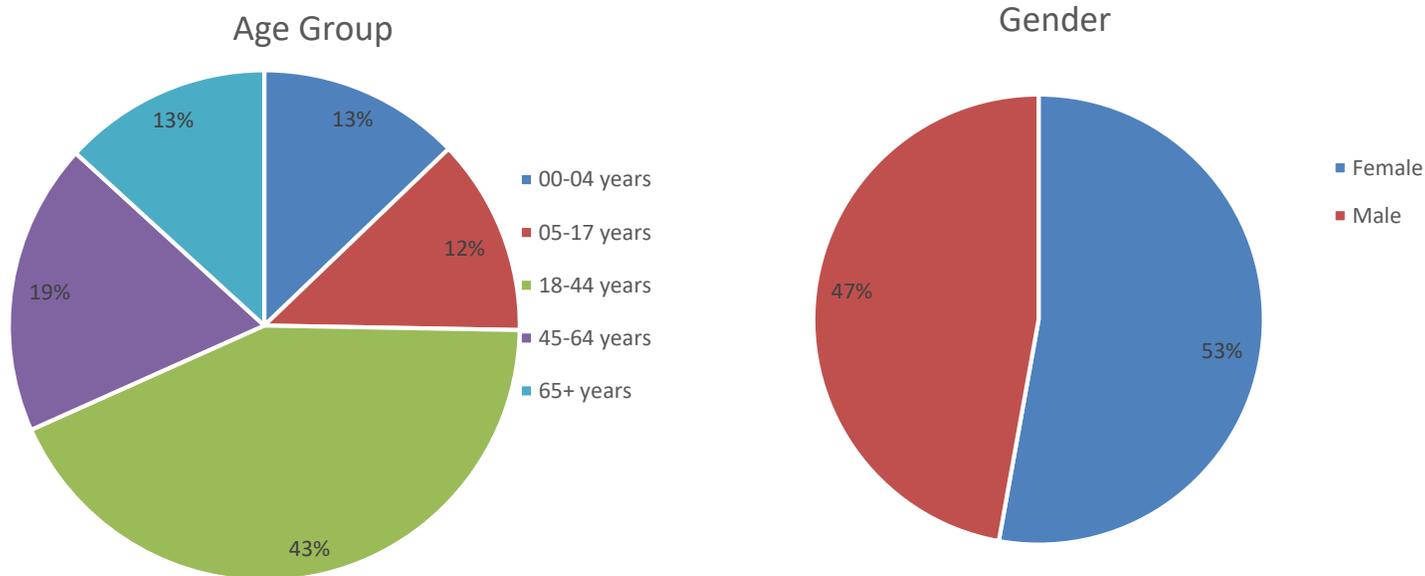
Virology

- HHD receives electronic lab reports from clinical labs. During week 21, the volume of flu tests received is comparable to the previous week. Flu A activity accounts for **86%** of the cumulative flu positives this season.

Syndromic Surveillance: ILI activity trend in 2019-2020



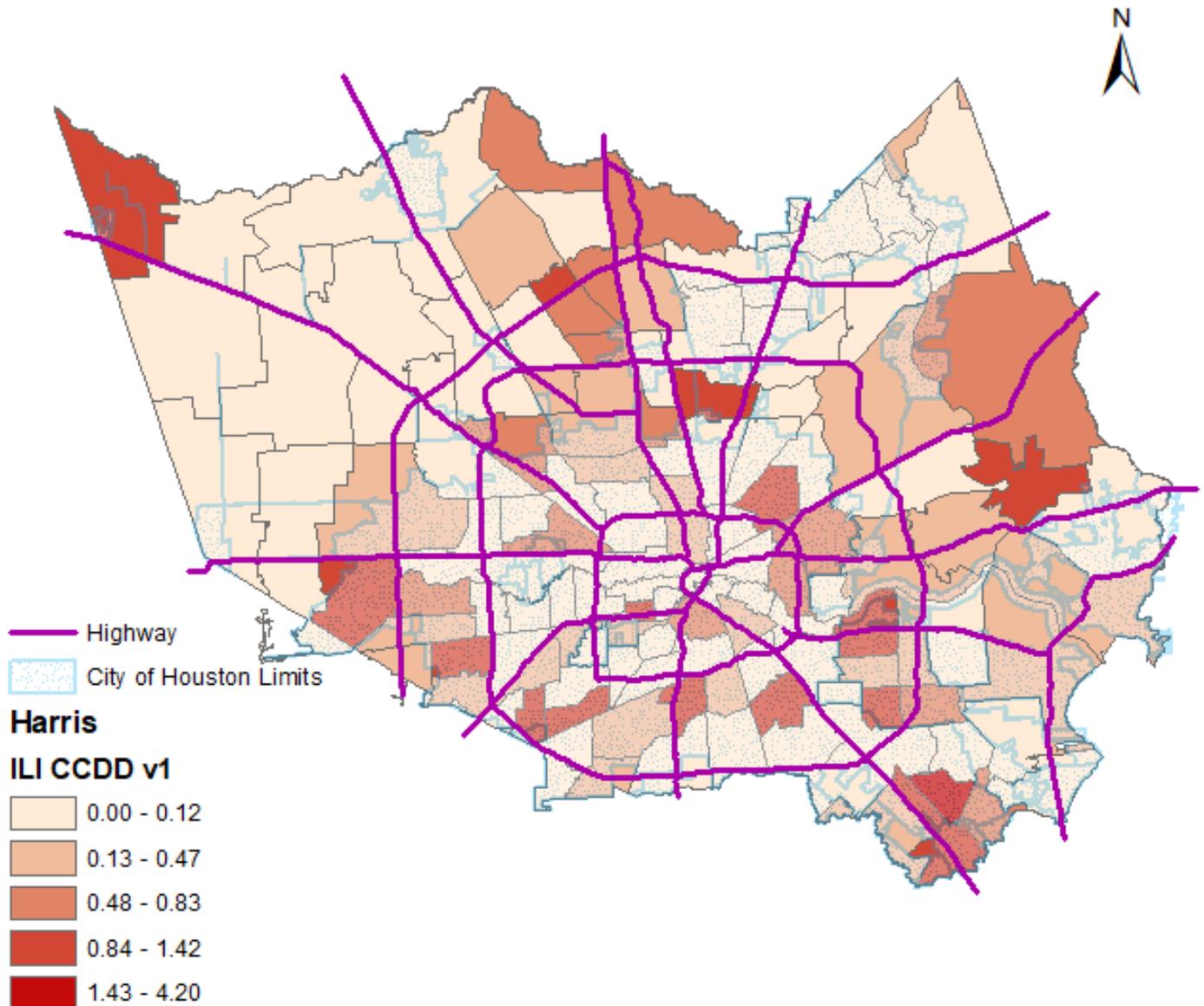
Syndromic Surveillance: 2019-2020 Influenza Season Age and Gender Distribution



During week 21, 0.35% of emergency center (EC) visits were due to influenza-like illness (ILI) complaints. Of the 265 patients presenting with ILI, the age group that recorded the most EC visits was the 18 to 44 years old (43%). Females accounted for 53% of patients presenting with ILI.

NOTE: ILI activity is assessed using information provided by the Southeast Texas Syndromic Surveillance System and includes data from 91 hospitals and 17 school-based clinics. Influenza-like illness (ILI) is defined as the mention of fever AND cough, OR fever AND sore throat, OR flu in the patient's Emergency Department (ED) chief complaint. These data do not represent laboratory confirmed cases of influenza nor do they represent all ED visits in Houston/Harris County.

Syndromic Surveillance: Geographic Distribution Map of ILI

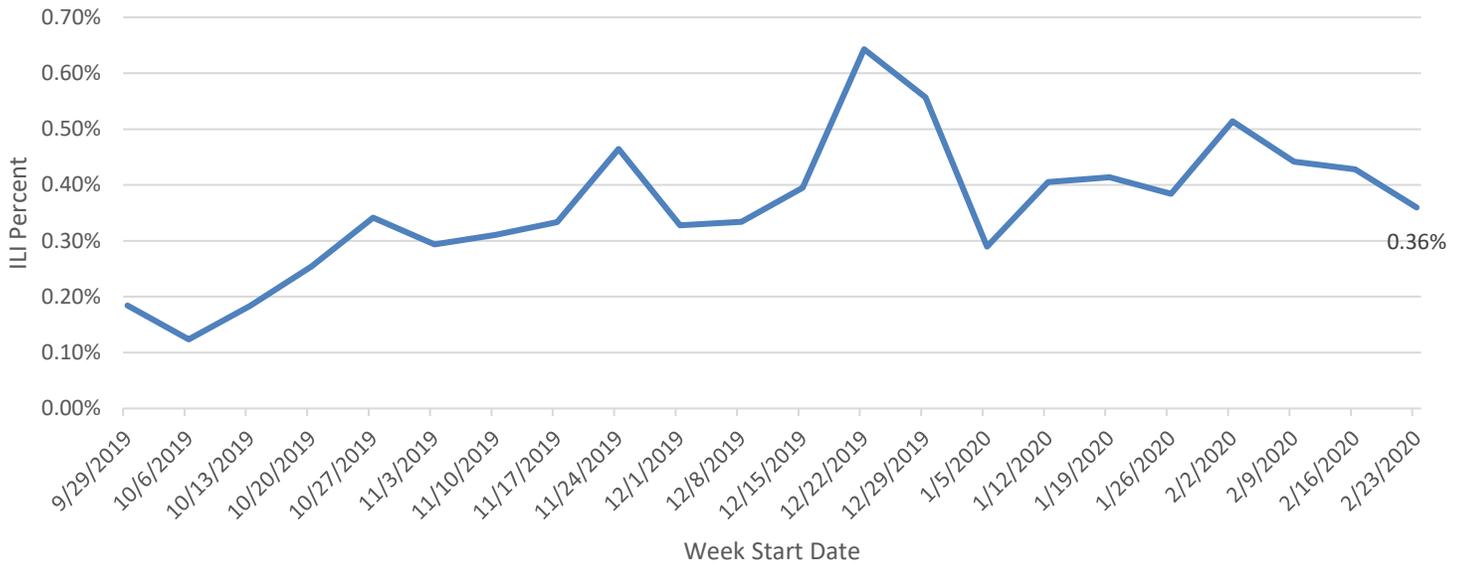


During week 21, the zip codes with the highest percent of ED visits (1.08 or greater) were:

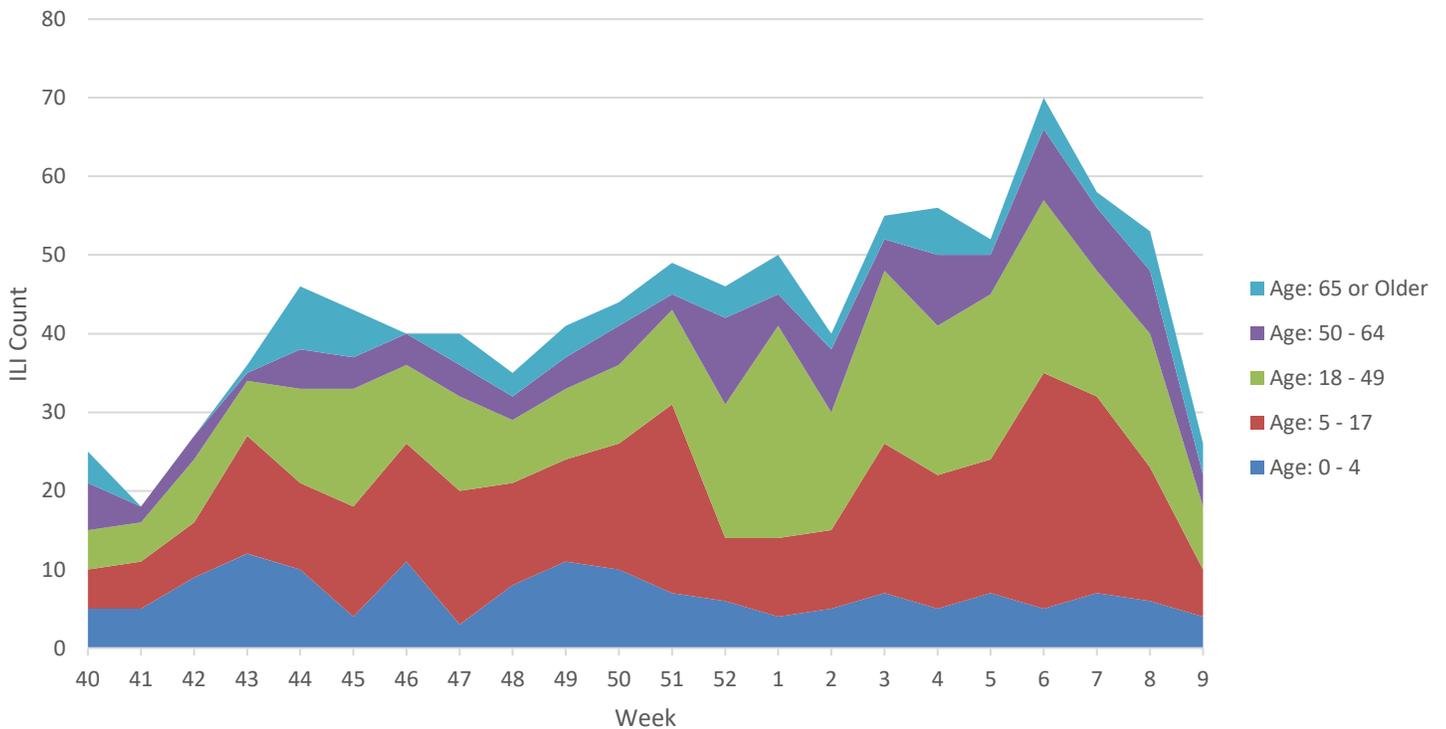
77051, 77068, 77484, 77072, 77098, 77028, 77061, 77598, 77562 and 77062 .

NOTE: Houston/Harris County ILI report distribution map was created using data provided by the Southeast Texas Syndromic Surveillance System and includes data from 91 hospitals and 17 school-based clinics. This map reflects the number of ILI cases from each residential zip code during the current week of reporting. 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. These data do not represent laboratory confirmed cases of influenza nor do they represent all ED visits in Houston/Harris County.

Athena: ILI percentage per week from 2019-2020

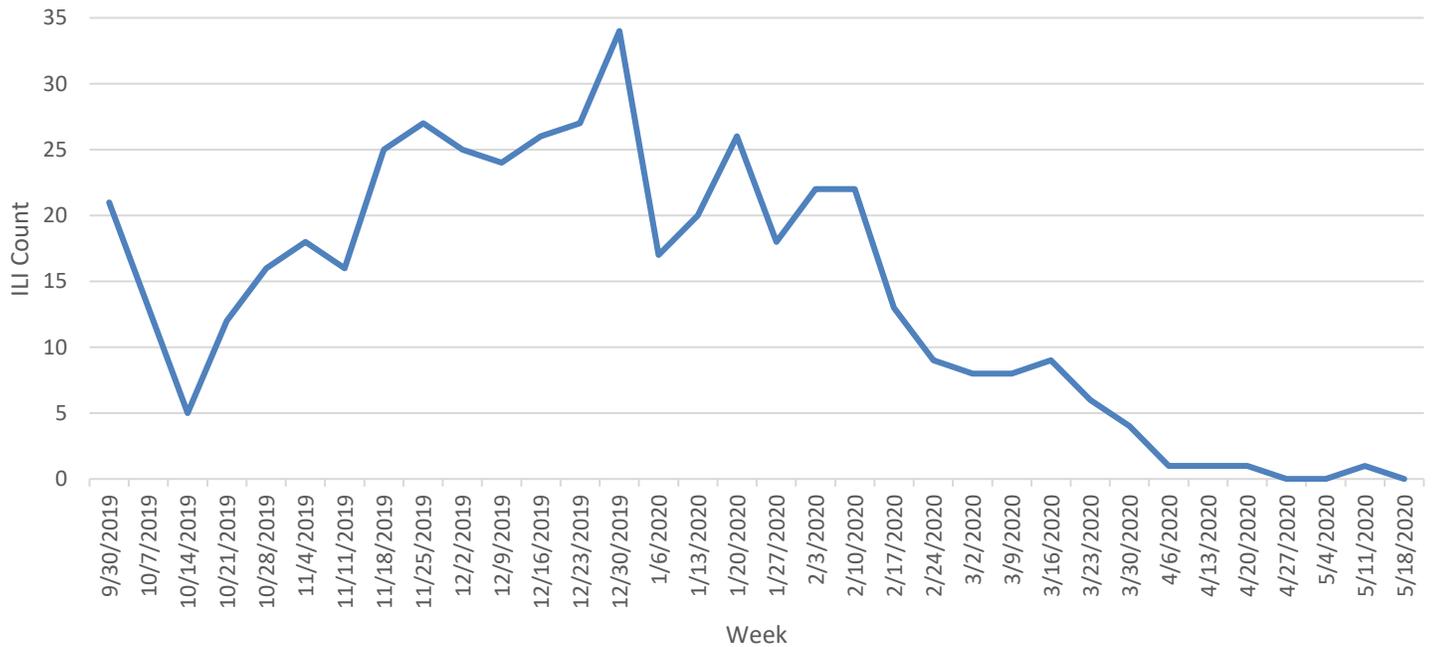


Athena: ILI per week by age group



In week 9, ILI accounted for 0.36% of outpatient visits in the Athena network. The total count of ILI visits reported within the network was 26*.

Flu Near You: ILI per week



Flu near You (FNY) is a participatory surveillance tool that compliments traditional disease surveillance. The count of Flu Near You (flunearyou.org) users reporting ILI in the week of 5/18/2020 is 0. See the last page for information on how to participate.

School Surveillance August 2019 - May 2020

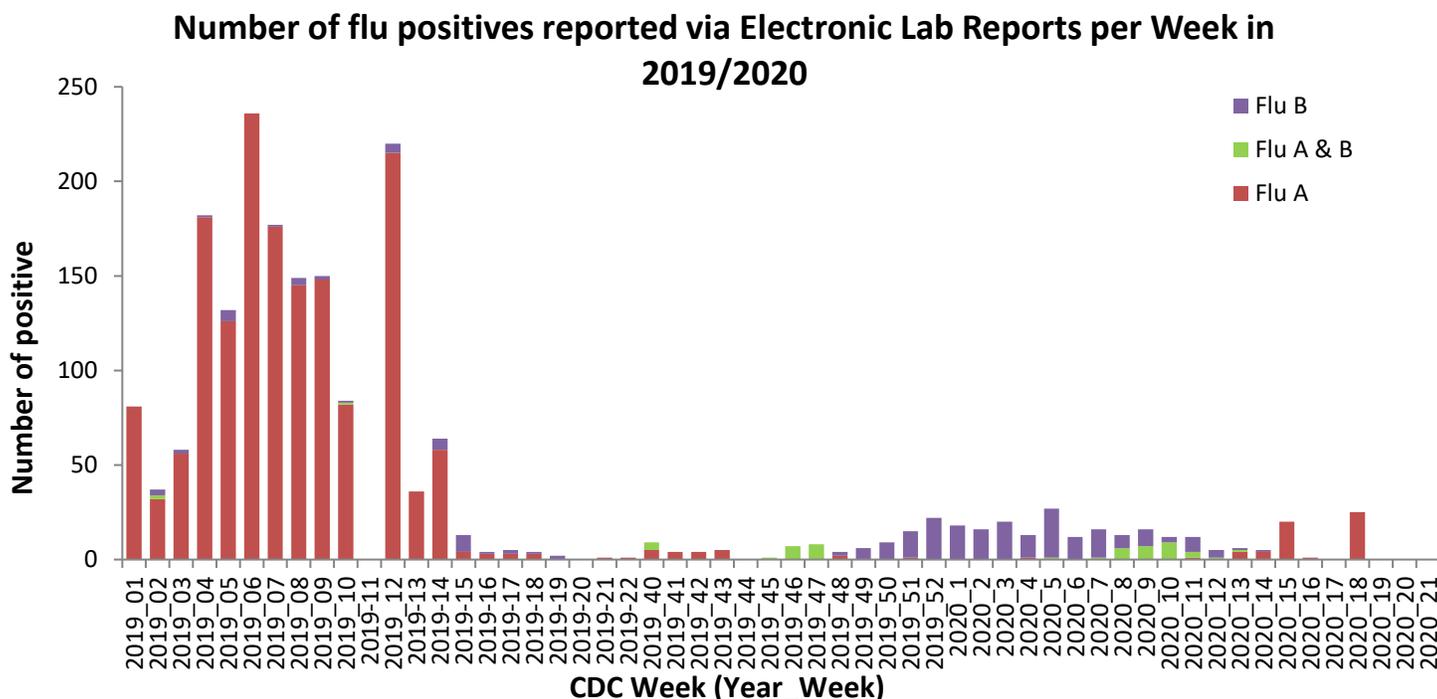
Table 1: ILI and Influenza Cases by Type and School Type¹ per Month

Month	Total Cases	Lab Confirmed		Flu A	Flu B	A+B	Unclassified	Elem Schools	Middle Schools	High Schools	Multi-level schools
Aug	1	1	100%	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Sep	32	4	13%	0	0	0	4	18	2	12	0
Oct	199	44	22%	6	2	1	32	142	7	21	29
Nov	224	61	27%	10	0	1	48	164	21	20	19
Dec	175	57	33%	16	7	1	32	131	12	32	0
Jan	431	145	34%	23	36	2	84	354	29	34	14
Feb	344	141	41%	19	25	2	95	257	23	26	38
Mar	135	44	33%	8	15	0	21	96	10	18	11
Apr	7	1	14%	0	0	0	1	5	0	0	2
May											
Sum	1548	498	32%	83	85	7	317	1168	104	163	113

School surveillance for ILI began in August for the current flu season. In April, a total of 7 cases were reported. The highest number of cases (5) were among elementary school students.

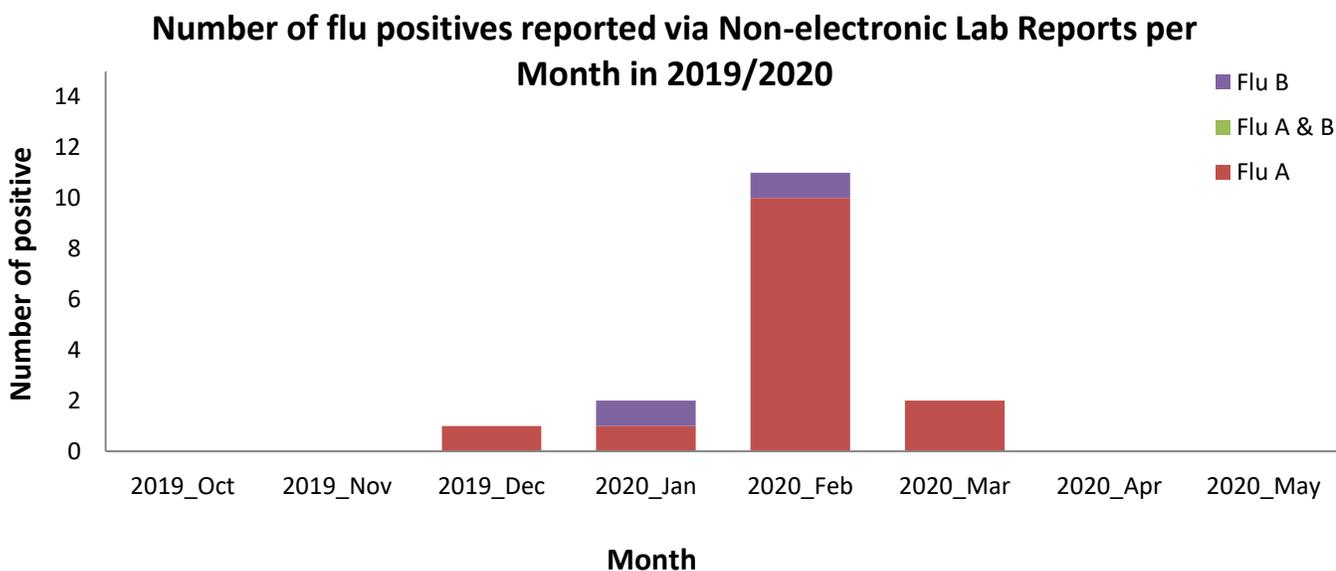
NOTE: Data on student ILI and influenza cases is collected from 306 schools within Houston Independent school district.¹ School will be counted more than once if more than one case from the same school is reported during the same reporting period.

Passive Viral Surveillance, Electronic lab reports



HHD receives electronic lab reports from clinical laboratories. In Week 21 of 2020, there was 0 laboratory confirmed influenza case****.

Passive Viral Surveillance, Nonelectronic lab reports



HHD received 0 nonelectronic lab reports of flu-positive results from clinical laboratories during this reporting period. February accounts for the highest counts (n=11) of Flu activity in 2019/2020

The *Houston Influenza Surveillance Weekly Report* is available on the Houston Health Department web site at:
<https://www.houstontx.gov/health/Epidemiology>

Flu Near You is a participatory surveillance (crowd sourcing) tool which complements traditional disease surveillance activities. Registered users can obtain real-time information on flu activity and influenza vaccines in the Greater Houston Metropolitan Area. Flu Near You features include:

- Report symptoms
- Find vaccines
- Map flu cases in the Greater Houston Metropolitan area
- Get flu news
- Share on social media

This season HHD invites you to register for Flu Near You at <https://flunearyou.org>



NOTE:
Influenza-like Illness (ILI) is defined as fever (temperature $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$) plus a cough OR a sore throat, in the absence of a known cause other than influenza.

Houston ILI baselines were determined using the same method as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Regional ILI baseline.

Data was obtained or accessed through the Southeast Texas Syndromic Surveillance System. However, any conclusions drawn from use of this data do not represent the official views of any consortium member jurisdiction.

Additional information regarding Houston, Texas and national ILI activity can be accessed at:

<http://www.houstontx.gov/health/>

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/disease/influenza/surveillance/2019-2020.aspx>

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>

<http://www.who.int/csr/don/en/>

**A glitch in the athena health system caused a lag in data reporting from week 10.*

*** Above baseline means the % of visits for ILI is above the region-specific baseline of 4.76%.*

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/overview.htm>

**** The numbers for pediatric flu-related deaths may change as information becomes available. Flu-related deaths in adults are not required to be reported to the health department.*

***** Electronic laboratory reporting (ELR) was interrupted due to system outages. The actual ELR volume may be higher than shown. Influenza passive surveillance report is based on the case creation date.*

Please note, some aspects of influenza surveillance may be affected by current COVID-19 response activities.

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