

New Jersey Department of Health Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet)

Your help is needed

ILINet providers are essential to influenza surveillance. They provide information which allows us to track the progression of seasonal influenza and can assist in the detection of novel influenza viruses. It was ILINet providers that identified the first cases of 2009 H1N1. Please consider having your clinic/practice represented in this vital public health program.

Most sentinel providers report that it takes them **between 20 and 40 minutes a week** to compile and report their surveillance data.

What is an influenza sentinel provider?

- An ILINet provider conducts surveillance for influenza-like illness (ILI) in collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), local health departments and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Data reported by ILINet providers, in combination with other influenza surveillance data, provide a national picture of influenza virus and ILI activity in the United States.
- New Jersey would like to enroll 40 providers throughout New Jersey.
- Year-round surveillance is encouraged in order to monitor for a novel influenza virus that could show up at any time and possibly signal a pandemic.

Who can be an influenza sentinel provider?

- Providers of any specialty (e.g., family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, infectious disease) are eligible to be sentinel providers.
- Providers in any type of practice (e.g., private practice, public health clinic, urgent care center, emergency room, university student health center) are eligible to be sentinel providers.

What data do sentinel providers collect and how is this information reported?

- Sentinel providers report the total number of patient visits each week and number of patient visits for influenza-like illness by age group (0-4 years, 5-24 years, 25-49 years, 50-64 years, > 64 years).
- These data are transmitted once a week via the internet or fax to a central data repository at CDC, which NJDOH and local public health agencies can access and use to track disease levels.

Why volunteer?

- Health care providers represent the first line of defense in the recognition of an unusual case or cluster of influenza. This system helps to integrate physicians into public health functions.
- Influenza viruses cause substantial morbidity and mortality (approximately 36,000 deaths) each year. This program is critical for monitoring the impact of influenza at the community level.
- In combination with other influenza surveillance data, ILINet data can be used to guide prevention and control activities, vaccine strain selection, and patient care. This information is critical for protecting the public's health.
- Sentinel providers will be offered specimen collection kits and PCR testing for influenza – **FREE OF CHARGE**.
- NJDOH can assist with the delivery of select influenza specimens to NJDOH Public Health and Environmental Laboratories for PCR and viral isolation.
- All participating providers who report information during the year will receive a participation certificate from the CDC.

For more information, contact your local health department or the NJDOH Infectious and Zoonotic Disease Program, Influenza Surveillance Program at **(609) 826-5964** or at InfluenzaAdvisoryGroup@doh.nj.gov

