

DOWNEAST DISTRICT: Public Health Preparedness

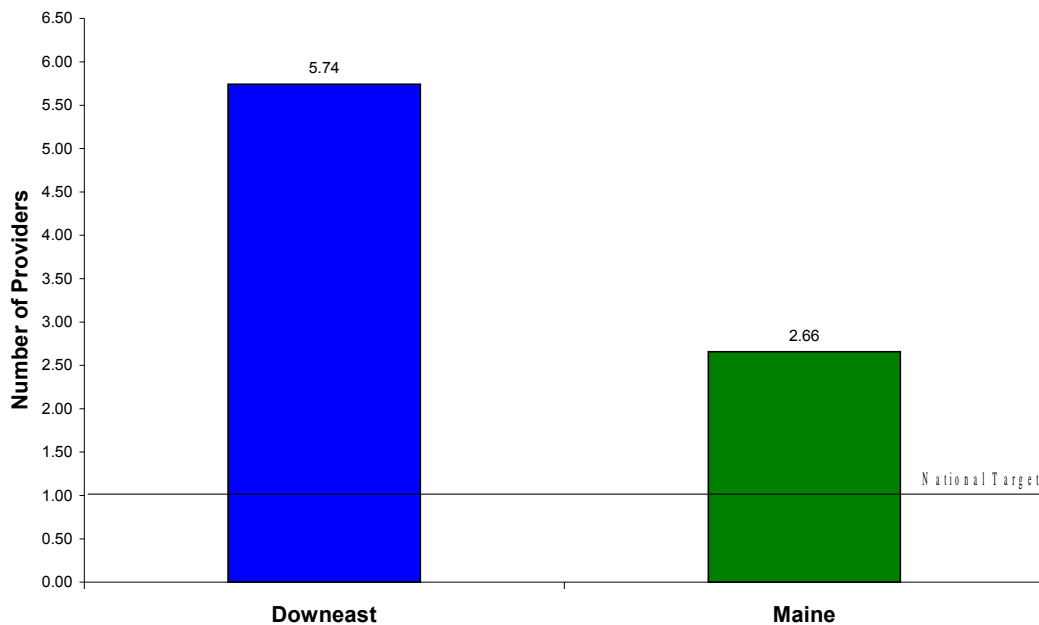
Sentinel Provider Influenza Surveillance Program

The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and a group of primary care providers statewide participate in the federal CDC’s Sentinel Provider Influenza Surveillance Program. That program was implemented to meet several objectives. Influenza viruses are constantly evolving and cause substantial morbidity and mortality every winter. Data from sentinel providers are critical for monitoring the impact of influenza. In combination with other influenza surveillance data, this information can be used to guide prevention and control activities, vaccine strain selection, patient care, and detection of new pathogenic organisms, such as the A:H5N1 avian strain. Sentinel providers receive feedback on the data submitted, summaries of regional and national influenza data, and a free subscription to CDC’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report and Emerging Infectious Diseases Journal. The most important consideration is that the data providers are critical for protecting the public’s health.

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, 25-64 years ≥65 years). These data are transmitted once a week via the internet or fax to a central data repository at the federal CDC. In addition, sentinel providers can submit specimens from a subset of patients to the State Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory for virus isolation free of charge.

The federal CDC has a target of 1 sentinel provider for every 250,000 population. In addition, Maine has a target of 1 sentinel provider per county and 1 for each Metropolitan Standard Statistical Area (MSMA).

Number of Sentinel Influenza Providers, per 250,000 Population



Source: Infectious Disease Epidemiology Program