

# MAINE PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT NETWORK SYSTEM

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**\*\*ADVISORY – Important Information\*\***

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**2011PHADV001**

**TO:** All HAN Recipients  
**FROM:** Stephen Sears, M.D., M.P.H., Acting Public Health Director  
**SUBJECT:** **Widespread Influenza Activity In Maine**  
**DATE:** Monday, January 31, 2011  
**TIME:** 1:30pm  
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Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC)  
(Formerly Bureau of Health)

## Widespread Influenza Activity in Maine – January 31, 2011

**Summary:** Influenza activity in Maine has steadily increased in January 2011. Influenza A pH1N1 (pandemic strain that circulated widely in 2009 and 2010), influenza A/H3 and influenza B have been confirmed in Maine indicating several strains of influenza are circulating in Maine. Three long term care facilities reported outbreaks of influenza in January. Influenza vaccination is still strongly encouraged and is widely available, especially to protect those persons at risk of more severe disease.

**Background:** Active surveillance for influenza activity is conducted year-round in Maine as part of a national influenza surveillance system. Surveillance activities include: monitoring levels of influenza-like illness at outpatient care sites, and in hospital emergency rooms; tracking influenza and pneumonia hospitalizations and deaths; and identification and subtyping of influenza and other respiratory viral isolates at major clinical laboratories in Maine, and at Maine's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory. Weekly reports are published during the season, and are available at: [http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/influenza\\_surveillance\\_weekly\\_updates.shtml](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/influenza_surveillance_weekly_updates.shtml).

Maine's first confirmed case of influenza was identified as influenza B during the first week of November. Influenza A/H3 and influenza A/pH1N1 were confirmed in Maine at the end of December. Laboratory confirmed cases of influenza steadily increased in January, and Maine reported widespread activity (meaning increased influenza-like illness and laboratory confirmed influenza in at least half the regions of the state) to federal CDC for the week ending January 22.

**Recommendations:** Maine CDC recommends that health care providers consider influenza testing for patients with influenza-like illness (defined as fever greater than 100° with cough or sore throat, in the absence of another known cause) who are hospitalized, who have died, or for whom a diagnosis of influenza would affect clinical care, infection control, or management of contacts. Updated guidance for use of Antivirals for the Treatment and Chemoprophylaxis of Influenza are available at [http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6001a1.htm?s\\_cid=rr6001a1\\_e](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6001a1.htm?s_cid=rr6001a1_e).

Maine CDC requests the report of:

- All laboratory-confirmed influenza A/pH1N1 influenza as required under the Rules for the Control of Notifiable Conditions (*10-144 CMR Ch. 258*)
- **any** laboratory confirmed influenza among persons hospitalized
- **any** laboratory confirmed influenza among persons who have died
- **any** laboratory confirmed influenza associated with an outbreak

Health care providers, medical laboratories, health care facilities, day care facilities, corrections facilities, and educational institutions are required to report notifiable conditions. Reports can be received by Maine CDC by fax (207-287-8186) or phone (1-800-821-5821) and should include all information on the notifiable conditions reporting form available at: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/ddc/epi/disease-reporting/index.shtml>.

As influenza continues to spread across the state, surveillance is needed to monitor the magnitude and severity of the season. Partners are encouraged to promote influenza prevention, including washing your hands, covering your cough, staying home when you're sick and getting vaccinated.