

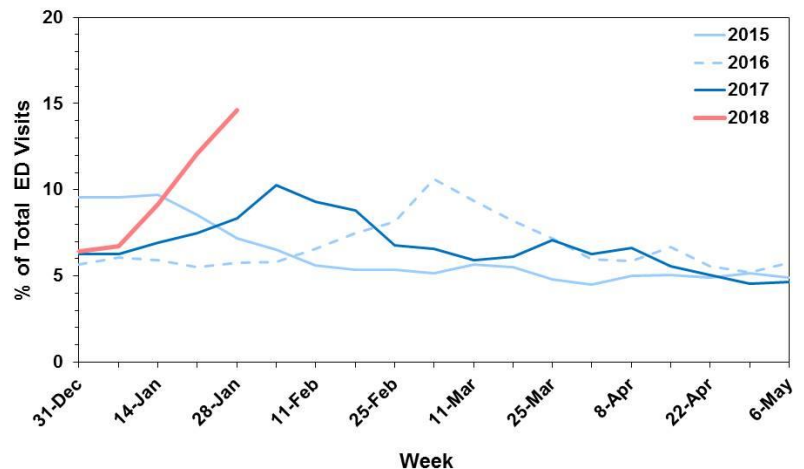
## **Health Advisory** **Influenza Transmission High in Philadelphia:** **Public Health Recommendations to Limit Transmission** February 1, 2018

### SUMMARY POINTS

- Influenza transmission is very high in Philadelphia and the region
- Healthcare facilities should expect to see potentially high volumes of patients with flu-like illness in the coming days and possibly weeks
- Vaccination is the best strategy to prevent getting influenza. Continue to administer vaccine to those 6 months and older
- All healthcare workers should be vaccinated
- Patients with severe disease should be treated with influenza antiviral medications promptly
- Healthcare providers should review and reinforce infection prevention strategies in healthcare settings and advise patients with the flu to stay home while symptomatic

**Influenza-like Illness at Philadelphia Emergency Departments (ED),  
 2015 - 2018\***

\*Data are provisional; current week does not contain full week of data



Influenza transmission has been very high over the past 2 weeks in Philadelphia as measured by positive laboratory reports and emergency department (ED) flu-like illness presentations and is expected to circulate at high levels for several weeks to come (Figure). Influenza A H3N2 is the predominant strain circulating locally; however, influenza B has been detected at higher levels than usual compared to what is typical for January. The Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH), Division of Disease Control is issuing this advisory to remind clinical providers that influenza is circulating heavily, and to review infection control and prevention strategies to decrease transmission in healthcare settings and the community.

### **Recommendations to Limit Influenza Transmission for Clinical Providers**

- Post signage in patient reception and triage areas for patients presenting with flu-like illness to self-identify and provide surgical type masks for these patients to wear while in facilities
- Designate a separate space for waiting and evaluation for patients presenting with flu-like illness and maintain adequate separation from other patients (6 feet if possible)
- Increase frequency of environmental disinfection in areas where sick patients wait and are evaluated
- Provide ongoing infection control training to healthcare staff that provide care to patients with flu-like illness, and to other staff with potential exposures in patient care areas
- Promote and administer seasonal influenza vaccine to all people 6 months of age and older who have not yet received vaccine, and ensure all healthcare workers have received flu vaccine
- Enforce strict hand washing protocols for healthcare workers, and periodically assess staff for symptoms
- Advise patients with flu-like illness to stay home while symptomatic and to maintain 6 feet of spatial separation from household members as able

For more information, including testing algorithms, treatment recommendations, and local activity updates, please visit the PDPH Health Information Portal at <https://hip.phila.gov>.