



# ***Influenza Activity Spotlight***

**2012–2013 Season**

**Issue #9 — December 3, 2012**

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**Reminder:** Summit calls are scheduled weekly every Thursday at 3 p.m. ET, unless cancelled. The next Summit call is scheduled for December 6, 2012. **Please email [L.J Tan](#) or [LaDora Woods](#) if you have any updates on activities to provide to the Summit.**

## **1. Summary of the National Influenza Vaccine Summit Call – 11/29/2012**

### **Announcement – L.J Tan (IAC)**

L.J announced that the upcoming Summit calls scheduled for December 20 and 27 are cancelled due to the Christmas holidays. If something important arises during this time, information will be emailed to partners, or a meeting will be called if needed.

### **Influenza Surveillance Update – Scott Epperson (CDC)**

There has been a significant increase in influenza activity during the last 2 weeks. Although reported influenza-like illness (ILI) remained below baseline levels through November 17, data to be released on November 30 indicates ILI levels will exceed baseline in several regions, particularly in Regions 4 and 10 in the south/southeast. (Region 4 – AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN and Region 10 – AR, LA, NM, OK, TX) U.S. cases to date are at the same level we were experiencing in February of the 2011–2012 season. One new influenza-associated pediatric death has been reported, for a total of 2 cases this season. Both pediatric deaths were attributed to A H3N2 virus. The ages of the individual pediatric cases are not released in order to protect confidentiality. Influenza A viruses tested to date are similar to vaccine strains, but only 70% of the type B strains tested were similar to the vaccine types.

### **2012 National Influenza Vaccination Week – Yvonne Garcia (CDC)**

As part of the effort to remind people that it is not too late to be vaccinated against influenza, the 2012 National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) will take place on December 2–8. Activities planned during this period are outlined [here](#). Highlights include a media teleconference on December 3, during which Dr. Melinda Wharton will discuss mid-season vaccination coverage levels. On the same day reports detailing this information will be posted at CDC's influenza [website](#). A radio media tour featuring CDC influenza experts also is planned, and PSAs will be placed in a variety of markets, including low vaccination areas and targeted to disparate populations. Prominent American Indian Radio DJs will be hosting live radio promotions targeting American Indian/Alaska Native populations. Digital and social media platforms will be incorporated into NIVW outreach efforts, including a live Twitter chat (Twitter@CDCFlu, #NIVW2012) on December 5 from 1–2 pm EST. A wide variety of blogs including many parent groups are planned, and 147 special influenza vaccine clinics are scheduled for 27 locations. Additional information and downloadable materials about NIVS are available [here](#).

## ***Flu Near You* – Michelle Holshue (APHA)**

Michelle joined the Summit call to provide an update about [Flu Near You](#). (This project was previously described on a Summit [call](#) in April 2012. *Flu Near You* was launched in October 2011 as a partnership between APHA, HealthMap, and Harvard University. The program is intended to engage people in disease surveillance to keep themselves and their communities healthy. Persons who register with the program receive a weekly email asking if they have experienced influenza symptoms during the previous week and inquiring about their vaccination status. A mobile app for smart phones is also available. Respondents also can report on ILI among family members. Responses are placed on a map, providing a graphical representation of the spread of influenza. Map views can zoom from the national level down to a specific zip code. The program is integrated with HealthMap's Vaccine Finder program, allowing individuals who see that transmission is occurring in their area and quickly determine a nearby location for obtaining vaccine. In the future, the program will include a personal profile, allowing participants to receive feedback on their responses over time. Additional improvements planned include more mobile apps and the ability to change reporting locations. A citywide promotional campaign including bus advertising was launched in San Francisco in conjunction with APHA Annual Meeting in November.

*Flu Near You*, which has been in place for just over 1 year, now has over 10,000 users who have submitted more than 88,000 surveys since October 2011. The program has expanded in Puerto Rico and is now available in Spanish. *Flu Near You* is uniquely positioned to analyze vaccine coverage, efficacy, and important demographic patterns in real-time. In the future the program plans to expand locations, available languages, and diseases covered, and it is hoped this will become a tool for behavior change. Other planned improvements include a partnership with LabCorp to provide home testing kits to verify reports of ILI. *Flu Near You* also hopes to expand its public health, corporate, faith-based and academic partnerships.

- 2. The CDC/Influenza Division Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report** for week 47, 2012 (ending November 17, 2012) is available [here](#). Influenza activity is definitely picking up! This site also includes maps of ILINet State Activity levels and the [geographic spread](#) of influenza illness as reported by state and territorial epidemiologists. This map indicates geographic spread of influenza viruses but does not measure the intensity of influenza activity. CDC's [Influenza Season messages](#) (December 3, 2012) and [Seasonal Influenza Key Points](#) (November 30, 2012) have been released. Archives of previous *FluViews* may be found [here](#).

### **3. Information from CDC**

- One infection with an influenza A variant virus (H3N2v) was reported from Iowa during week 47 from Iowa. Information about the recent H3N2v outbreaks is available [here](#).
- National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) is December 2–8, 2012. [NIVW Key Points](#) have been released.
- Per requests recently received from Summit partners, these [sample tweets](#) can be used on Twitter to promote NIVW and influenza vaccination.

### **4. National Council on Aging Launches *Flu + You* Program with Free Materials Available!**

*Flu + You* from the National Council on Aging (NCOA) continues to reach adults age 65 and older, as well as their families and caregivers, with critical information about flu and prevention. NCOA has distributed more than 600,000 consumer education materials through its aging network this season. The materials, available in both English and Spanish, will continue to be available free of charge through the remainder of the 2012–13 influenza season. NCOA invites providers and stakeholders to order free *Flu + You* [materials](#) to support their educational efforts. Materials also are available for download. *Flu + You* is a program of NCOA in collaboration with Sanofi Pasteur.

## 5. CDC Holds Media Conference on Current Influenza Season

On December 3, 2012 CDC held a [media conference](#) to discuss the current influenza season. Dr. Thomas Frieden announced that the influenza season is off to its earliest start in nearly 10 years, with H3N2 as the primary circulating strain. An H3N2 dominant season is usually associated with more severe influenza. Dr. Frieden also announced that the match in the vaccine for the H3N2 strain is very good, thus increasing the incentive for people to get vaccinated. Examples of media reports are available from [CBS News](#) and [UPI](#).

## 6. Canadian Comedian Rick Mercer's Impassioned Support of Influenza Vaccination!

Rick Mercer, an extremely popular and talented comedian in Canada, is well known for the "Rick's Rant" segment on his show. This Tuesday the [Rant](#) was focused on Rick's impassioned recommendation that people get out and get an influenza shot.

## 7. Summit Relaunches the Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System (IVATS)

In response to Hurricane Sandy and possible losses of seasonal influenza vaccine among vaccine providers, the National Influenza Vaccine Summit has re-opened IVATS (Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System) on its [web page](#). The information is available by clicking on under "Looking for Influenza Vaccine for your Clinic" in the lower right corner of the webpage, or click [here](#) for a direct link to the PDF.

IVATS is a resource for physicians looking to purchase influenza vaccine and contains information from approved, enrolled and participating wholesale vaccine distributors or manufacturers of U.S. licensed influenza vaccine. Information on the site will be updated throughout the 2012–2013 influenza vaccination season.

Please share this resource with any providers in your jurisdiction who may have questions about where to purchase influenza vaccine for the current influenza season. For questions about IVATS, please contact [Diane Peterson](#) at the Immunization Action Coalition.

## 8. Canadian Government Announces Strong Support for Influenza Research

On the opening day of the [10th Canadian Immunization Conference](#), the Honorable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health, announced two important initiatives to protect Canadians from infectious diseases. "Immunization lays the foundation for good health in this country," said Minister Aglukkaq. "That is why we are renewing our commitment to a leading influenza research network and launching an updated, online edition of the Canadian Immunization Guide."

The Public Health Agency of Canada/Canadian Institutes of Health Research Influenza Research Network (PCIRN) is made up of leading influenza researchers from across the country. The network conducts cutting-edge work that informs public health programs and helps protect Canadians. The Harper Government will invest \$4.5 million to continue its support of PCIRN.

## 9. More coverage on computer model to predict regional peaks in influenza outbreaks

This new [story](#) reports on the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) paper featured in last week's [newsletter](#).

The story suggests that a new system developed by scientists at Columbia University and the NOAA will allow health officials to forecast weeks in advance when seasonal influenza will peak, and how severe it will be. The formula used data from the Google Flu Trends project, which estimates outbreaks based on the number of flu-related search queries in a given region. The system adapts techniques used in modern weather prediction to turn real-time, Web-based estimates of influenza infection into local forecasts of seasonal flu. An abstract of the PNAS is available [here](#).

**10. 2012-2013 Influenza Vaccine Information Statements are now available**

The [influenza vaccine information statements](#) have recently been updated. Both the TIV and LAIV VISs, as well as the TIV Large Print edition, have been updated, and RTF files also are available. All are dated 7/2/2012. These editions have been converted to the updated VIS format, but the text in both VISs is identical to that in last year's influenza VISs. Note that there will be minor updates in the ACIP influenza recommendations, but these do not affect the VIS language.

**11. Summit Web Site Offers Wonderful Resources on Influenza Vaccination!**

Remember to visit the [Summit web site](#) for the latest on influenza immunization resources and to view archived copies of the weekly updates.