



(December 29, 2015)

In order to further improve the lines of communication and to respond to the concerns between the National VA Council and you our members, I have established a National VA Council Briefing. This NVAC Briefing will bring you the latest news and developments within DVA and provide you with the current status of issues this Council is currently addressing. I believe that this NVAC Briefing will greatly enhance the way in which we communicate and the way in which we share new information, keeping you better informed.

Alma L. Lee
National VA Council, President

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**In This Briefing:** Influenza Activity Data and Updates - Week 50 (Dec 13 - Dec 19, 2015)

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Please forward to colleagues as appropriate.

Actions and Key Messages

- **Across the U.S.,** seasonal influenza activity increased slightly but remains low overall. One state (South Carolina) experienced high influenza-like illness (ILI) activity. Puerto Rico and two states (New Jersey and Texas) experienced moderate ILI activity. New York City and three states (Alabama, Georgia, and Virginia) experienced low ILI activity. 44 states experienced minimal ILI activity. •No states reported widespread influenza activity. Guam, Puerto Rico and five states (Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania) reported regional activity. The U.S. Virgin Islands and fourteen states (Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, and Virginia) reported local influenza activity.
- **Within VA facilities,** influenza activity is stable and remains low overall. Outpatient influenza visits, outpatient antiviral prescriptions and percent of influenza tests positive increased slightly. Influenza-coded hospitalizations remained stable.

- **VA Staff Influenza Vaccination Week is January 10-16, 2016.** This week is to recognize the importance of annual influenza vaccination for our staff. Many health care personnel (employees, volunteers, and trainees) have already had their flu shots. For those who have not, this week is a time to again encourage health care personnel (HCP) to take this important personal and public health step. Resources can be found on the IDPIO SharePoint site.

VHA Influenza Data

Veteran Patient Data

- VHA patient summary data is presented below. For details (and “by facility” report) visit the [IDPIO SharePoint site](#). This report is compiled by the Public Health Surveillance and Research Group, Office of Quality, Safety and Value.

Since August 1, 2015:

- 1,450,243million flu vaccinations have been administered in outpatient settings within VHA facilities.
- 9.9% (143,360) were coded as being the high-dose vaccine formulation.
- These vaccination figures do not include patients who may have been vaccinated outside of VHA, such as at a Walgreen’s Pharmacy (about 45,000 Veterans have been vaccinated at Walgreens).
- 1.4% (166/11,934) of patients tested have been confirmed for influenza by VA laboratories.
- 64.5% of positive tests were Influenza A, 28.9% were Influenza B, and 6.6% unspecified.
- 89 individuals had an influenza-coded hospitalization for 2015-16 season.
- Overall for the season, 10.1 % (9/89) required an critical care/ICU stay.
- No deaths have been recorded

During week 50 (Dec 13 - Dec 19, 2015):

- Over 36,000 patient flu vaccinations were administered in VHA facilities.
- 2% (26/1,315) lab specimens tested positive for influenza.
- The highest number of lab-confirmed flu tests were seen in California (7), Illinois (3), Florida (3), and Puerto Rico (3).

- The proportion of primary/urgent care outpatient visits for ILI was 1.63%.

Employee Data

- VHA employee and volunteer staff flu vaccination data is presented below. For details see the reports in the [IDPIO SharePoint Site](#). This report is compiled by Occupational Health, VA Central Office.
- Nationally, 42% of paid employees have been documented as receiving flu vaccination as of December 19, 2015. This is a 1% increase from the previous week. The overall VHA volunteer influenza vaccination rate (as documented in OHRS) is 8%, a 1% increase from the previous week.
- The facilities with the largest percent of documented employee influenza vaccination in OHRS are: Sioux Falls 81%, Boise 81%, Albany 73%, Erie 71%, Wilmington 71% Walla Walla 69%, St Cloud 65%, Fargo 64%, Amarillo 64%, Manchester 63%, Saginaw 63%, Iron Mountain 63%, Madison 63%, Salt Lake City 60%, West Texas 60%. (Note - VISN 2 data cannot be broken into individual facilities in OHRS – except Albany and Syracuse).
- The facilities with the largest percent of documented Volunteer influenza vaccination in OHRS are: Walla Walla 92%, Boise 69%, Roseburg 57%, St Cloud 52%, and Sioux Falls 43%.
- Facility employee influenza vaccination rates as of December 19, 2015 (documentation in OHRS, actual vaccination rate may be higher). Also, when staff are hired the denominator increases. If occupational health does not document vaccination in OHRS on these new employees, the vaccination rate will decrease. Therefore, some facilities may see a slight decrease in the employee vaccination rate from the previous week.

80-89% - 2 facilities – Sioux Falls, Boise

70-79% - 3 facilities - Albany, Erie, Wilmington

60-69% - 11 facilities – Boston, Manchester, Saginaw, Amarillo, Fargo, St Cloud, Iron Mountain, Madison, Salt Lake City, Walla Walla, West Texas

50-59% - 25 facilities - VA Central Western Mass., Altoona, Lebanon, Butler, Asheville, Ann Arbor, Tomah, Salem, Fayetteville, AR, Columbus, Louisville, Oklahoma City, Texas Valley Coastal Bend, El Paso, Sheridan, Cheyenne, Montana HCS, Portland, Roseburg, Long Beach, Central California, Black Hills, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, J.C. Montgomery

40-49% - 46 facilities - Providence, Maine, Syracuse, Bronx, Hudson Valley, Clarksburg, Coatesville, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Wilkes-Barre, Salisbury, Durham, Beckley, Augusta, Birmingham, Columbia, SC, Miami, Orlando, Tampa, Huntington, Mountain Home, Lexington, Chillicothe, Cincinnati, Dayton, Illiana, Battle Creek, Captain James Lovell FHC, Indianapolis, Central Texas, North Texas, South Texas, Central Arkansas, SE Louisiana, New Mexico, Phoenix, Eastern Colorado, Southern Arizona, Puget Sound, Spokane, Alaska, North California, Long Beach, Southern Nevada, NWHHS Omaha, Grand Junction

30-39% - 30 facilities - Bedford, Connecticut, White River Junction, Syracuse, New York HCS, East Orange-VA New Jersey HCS, Martinsburg, Hampton, Richmond, Atlanta, Tuscaloosa, Central Alabama HCS, North Florida/South Georgia, West Palm Beach, CW Bill Young, Memphis, Tennessee Valley, Cleveland, Detroit, Marion IN, Hines, Alexandria, Biloxi, Jackson, Shreveport, White City, Palo Alto, Sierra Nevada, Pacific Islands, Loma Linda

Less than 30% - Baltimore HCS, Washington DC VAMC, Fayetteville, NC, Charleston, Dublin, San Juan, Jesse Brown, St Louis JC Division, Houston, Northern Arizona, San Francisco, San Diego, West LA

Volunteer Data

90-100% - 1 facility - Walla Walla

80-89% - 0 facilities

70-79% - 0 facilities

60-69% - 2 facilities – Boise, Iowa City

50-59% - 2 facility – Roseburg, St. Cloud

40-49% - 1 facilities - Sioux Falls

30-39% - 1 facility – Erie

CDC Influenza Surveillance Data

CDC's Situation Update: Summary of Weekly FluView is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>.

Influenza Websites

- VHA's influenza website at www.publichealth.va.gov/flu and the [Infection: Don't Pass It On \(IDPIO\) SharePoint](#) for additional resources (and VA's Influenza Manual)
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) website for more information, including the flu surveillance and activity map at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>.
- VHA Influenza Immunization Guidance Statement – VHA has developed guidance on clinical preventive services, including immunizations at http://vaww.prevention.va.gov/clinical_services_by_type_of_service.asp#immunizations.

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