

Now You Can Help With...

# Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance

...In Only a Few Minutes a Week!

## What is an influenza sentinel provider?

An influenza sentinel provider conducts surveillance for the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) in collaboration with the state health department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data reported by sentinel providers, in combination with other influenza surveillance data, provide a national picture of influenza virus and ILI activity in the U.S. Over 3,100 providers were enrolled in this network during the 2012-13 influenza season.

## What data do sentinel providers collect? How and to whom are data reported?

Sentinel providers report each week the total number of patient visits and the number of patient visits for influenza-like illness by age group (0-4 years, 5-24 years, 25-49 years, 50-64 years,  $\geq 65$  years). These data are transmitted once a week via the Internet or fax to a central data repository at CDC. Most providers report that it takes them **less than 30 minutes a week** to compile and report their data. In addition, sentinel providers can submit specimens from a subset of patients for influenza testing at the Ohio Department of Health Lab **free of charge**.

## Who can be an influenza sentinel provider?

Providers of any specialty in any type of practice are eligible to be sentinel provider:

- Emergency Medicine
- Internal Medicine
- Student Health
- Family Practice
- OB/GYN
- Urgent Care
- Infectious Disease
- Pediatrics

Practice settings that are **not eligible** are elementary, middle, or high school health centers, and any type of institutional setting such as nursing homes or prisons.

## Why volunteer?

Influenza viruses are constantly evolving and cause substantial morbidity and mortality (a range of 3,000 – 49,000 influenza-associated deaths) almost every winter. Data from sentinel providers is critical in monitoring the impact of influenza and, in combination with other influenza surveillance data, can be used to guide prevention and control activities, vaccine strain selection, and patient care. 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 provided are critical for protecting the public's health.

**For more information on Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance, please contact Nic Fisher, Ohio's influenza surveillance coordinator, at 614-466-0456.**



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