The District Health Department began conducting active influenza surveillance on September 29, 2002, and will continue through the last week of March, 2003.

**Goals of the program are to:**
- Characterize the prevailing strains of influenza in the community;
- Measure the impact of the disease in the community, and
- Obtain and disseminate information regarding influenza activity to health care providers, the public and those concerned with control measures.

**The influenza surveillance program consists of four major components:**
- Weekly reports of influenza-like illness (ILI) to the Communicable Disease Program by selected sentinel healthcare providers. Six sentinel providers have been selected to participate in the 2002-2003 Influenza Surveillance Program. They include three hospitals, one family practice office, one adult internal medicine office, and one student health service. Each site sends weekly reports tallying the numbers of patients who meet the case definition of influenza-like illness (ILI) and the total number of patients seen at that site for any reason. The case definition for ILI is fever (≥ 100°F [37.8°C], oral or equivalent) AND cough and/or sore throat (in the absence of a KNOWN cause). Patients who meet the case definition but have diagnostic tests to confirm another cause (e.g. a positive strep or RSV test) are not counted as ILI. A patient with fever, chills, body aches, and nasal congestion but no cough or sore throat is not considered a case of ILI. From September 29 through November 2, 2002 the range for ILI has been 2.1% to 2.5%, with an overall average of 2.3%.

- The collection of a limited number of throat cultures by sentinel health care providers from persons with ILI. The purpose of the laboratory confirmation is to verify which type of influenza virus is in the community. All positive influenza type A cultures will be subtyped. Sentinel providers have submitted eight specimens to Nevada State Public Health Laboratory since September 29, 2002. All eight specimens are negative for influenza.

- Monitoring of influenza/pneumonia mortality through death certificates. Deaths due to pneumonia and influenza (P&I deaths) are reported weekly as a proportion of all deaths recorded in Washoe County. The number of P&I deaths each week are compared to national levels, as well as to the number that would be expected in the absence of an influenza epidemic. The national P&I ratio has been below the epidemic threshold. From September 29 through November 2, 2002, the P&I range for Washoe County has been 2.6% to 10.0% with an overall average of 6.0%. The P&I ratio exceeded the epidemic threshold in first and second weeks of surveillance.

- All health care providers, school nurses, and extended care facilities who see an unusually high incidence of ILI in their setting are encouraged to report to the District Health Department by calling (775) 328-2487. The Influenza Surveillance Program has not yet received any calls to indicate such activity.

The information collected is compiled in the form of a weekly report and can be accessed at the following website: [www.co.washoe.nv.us/health](http://www.co.washoe.nv.us/health). Updates will also be provided in future editions of the Epi-News. For more information, please call (775) 328-2487.
The 2002-2003 trivalent influenza vaccine contains the same type A subtype antigens as last year:

♦ A/Moscow/10/99 (H3N2)-like, and
♦ A/New Caledonia/20/99 (H1N1)-like

The type B component changed to B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like. Projected influenza vaccine production for this season is between 92 and 97 million doses. Approximately 87 million doses were produced in the 2001-2002 influenza season.

Persons at highest priority to receive influenza vaccine according to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) are:

**Those at increased risk for influenza-related complications:**

♦ persons 65 years of age and older;
♦ residents of nursing homes or chronic care facilities;
♦ persons aged 6 months to 64 years with chronic pulmonary or cardiovascular disease, including asthma;
♦ persons aged 6 months to 64 years with chronic metabolic diseases such as diabetes, renal disease, hemoglobinopathies or immune dysfunction (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by HIV);
♦ children and adolescents (aged 6 months to 18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy (and would therefore be at risk to develop Reye syndrome after influenza infection);
♦ women who will be in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during the influenza season; and
♦ healthy children 6-23 months of age.

**Persons who can transmit influenza to those at high risk**

♦ Health-care workers.
♦ Household contacts of persons at increased risk for influenza-related complications

(including contacts of infants less than 6 months of age who are not eligible for influenza vaccine).

**Children 6 months to <9 years of age receiving influenza vaccine for the first time**

Now that we are well into November, our attention may be directed to those healthy persons 50-64 years of age and all other healthy persons wishing to minimize their risk of acquiring influenza. People between 50 and 64 years of age have an increased prevalence of high-risk conditions (whether they are aware of it or not). Even those in this age group who are not in a high-risk category benefit from vaccination as they can avoid influenza, miss fewer days from work, and have less need for medical visits and medication, including antibiotics.

The Washoe District Health Department Immunization Clinic is now offering influenza vaccine to all persons who wish to decrease their risk of becoming ill from influenza. The Washoe District Health Department is located at 1001 E. Ninth Street, Building B (next to the Reno Livestock Events Center). Immunizations are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. No appointment is necessary. Cost for influenza vaccination is $15.00. Pneumococcal (Pneumonia) vaccine is also available for $20.00. Insurances accepted are Medicare Part B, Medicaid, and Nevada Check-Up.

Influenza vaccine is also available through local health care providers. Inquiries may be directed to the following information lines:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Nevada Medical Center</td>
<td>1-800-874-5775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REMSA (Homebound patients only)</td>
<td>858-5741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Mary's Health Network</td>
<td>770-3553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washoe Health System</td>
<td>982-5757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carson-Tahoe Hospital</td>
<td>886-7402</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Various new patient-educational materials on influenza vaccine are available on the CDC influenza website at www.cdc.gov/nip/flu. For more information please call (775) 328-3724 or visit the website at www.co.washoe.nv.us/health.