THIS WEEK’S FLU UPDATE FROM DPH

HARTFORD – The state Department of Public Health (DPH) today released the weekly 2017-2018 Influenza Season Update for the week ending on February 10th. The full report is available on DPH’s Influenza Surveillance and Statistics webpage. DPH also announced that low/no-cost flu vaccine clinics will be held this Saturday in Clinton, Coventry and Guilford. Please click here for the current schedule and locations of Saturday’s flu clinics (located at the bottom of the webpage).

“Sadly, 14 more influenza-associated deaths were reported to us last week,” said DPH Commissioner Dr. Pino. “Because we are still experiencing widespread influenza actively, it is likely that we will continue to see additional flu-related deaths in the coming weeks.”

According to this week’s update, which tracks flu activity through February 10th, flu activity in Connecticut remains high and widespread. Statewide emergency department visits attributed to the flu have increased another tenth of a percent over last week to 14.3%, which is the highest weekly level observed in Connecticut since the 2009 H1N1 pandemic.

A total of 1,638 patients have been hospitalized with confirmed cases of flu between August 27, 2017 and February 10, 2018. A total of 4,915 influenza positive laboratory tests have been reported so far this season.

So far this season, 77 deaths have been attributed to the flu (61 associated with influenza A, 16 with influenza B). Of these deaths, 62 were among patients over the age of 65, 9 were 50-64 years of age, 4 were 25-49 years of age, 1 was between 19-24 years of age, and 1 was between 5-18 years of age. The current season total of 77 deaths is the highest number of influenza-associated deaths reported to the Department in the past 5 years.

DPH has received questions from parents and school officials around the state about limiting the spread of flu in schools. General cleaning products and routine cleaning procedures are adequate for killing and removing flu virus because the virus is relatively fragile. It is not necessary to close schools to clean and disinfect them. Routinely cleaning surfaces and objects that are touched often and emptying trash cans is the best way to slow the spread of the flu – and this advice applies to homes and businesses as well as schools.

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