

IMMUNIZATION Update

January 30 | 961 words | 5 -minute read

Immunization Update

January 30 | Issue: 135



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Question of the week

Where have we been?

The Immunization Update was recently on pause as we took a step back to refine our newsletter content and revamp our layout. We also welcomed our new Secretary, Dr. Ralph L. Abraham, or "Doc," as he prefers to be called. Our brief hiatus allowed us the opportunity to reassess our strategies and ensure that we are delivering the most informative and impactful content to our audience. We are thrilled to reengage with our readers and to share relevant, timely and essential information about immunizations in Louisiana.



Protection from respiratory viruses: Key steps for medical providers

Louisiana continues to grapple with elevated flu activity, particularly in northern regions and the greater New Orleans area, alongside rising COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations. The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) underscores these crucial measures for preventing illness and hospitalization:



1. Immunizations:

Immunization against flu, COVID-19 and RSV is paramount for all individuals ages 6 months and older. LDH recommends vaccinations to safeguard against hospitalizations, offer protection for long-term health and reduce mortality. No-cost COVID-19 vaccines are accessible through CDC's [Bridge Access Program](#) for uninsured individuals or those with limited coverage.

2. Treatments: Effective treatments for flu and COVID-19 are available, significantly reducing severe illness, hospitalization and mortality. High-risk individuals, especially those ages 50 and above or with underlying medical conditions, should promptly seek medical advice for COVID-19 treatment within 5-7 days of symptom onset.

3. Testing: Rapid detection through tests, including home tests, is critical to prompt treatment and containment efforts. No-cost COVID-19 testing is accessible through CDC's [Increasing Community Access to Testing \(ICATT\)](#) program.

4. Everyday prevention: Beyond medical interventions, adherence to preventive measures such as staying home when sick, masking, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and improving indoor air quality are essential for added protection.

LDH provides comprehensive updates through its [Respiratory Virus Dashboard](#), detailing rates and cases of COVID-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) for emergency department visits, laboratory tests, hospital admissions and mortality data.

Vaccination, prompt treatment, testing and everyday preventive actions are pivotal in mitigating the impact of respiratory viruses. Please continue to alert patients and others to these easy steps that can combat the spread of seasonal illnesses.

For more information, visit immunizations.la.gov.

The latest on the flu

On Monday, October 23, LDH updated its [Respiratory Virus Dashboard](#) displaying activity for three respiratory viruses: COVID-19, influenza and RSV. The dashboard is based on the weekly report (Week 3) developed by LDH's Infectious Disease Epidemiology section.

Both the report and the dashboard provide supplemental surveillance and historical data for the three conditions and non-influenza respiratory viruses. In addition, national influenza surveillance updates can be found at [CDC FluView Interactive](#).

Key Updates:

ILI: 6.2% ↓ (above baseline)

Flu Percent Positivity: 11.8% ↓

Flu Hospitalizations: ↓

Flu-associated Mortality: ↑
47 pediatric influenza-associated deaths have been reported in the U.S. this season; two of these deaths occurred in Louisiana.

RSV Season: OFF

By the numbers: Seasonal influenza activity remains elevated in most parts of the country.

- 10 influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported during Week 3, bringing the 2023-2024 season total to 57 pediatric deaths.
- In Louisiana, flu (influenza-like illness or ILI) activity **has decreased to 6.2% but is above the regional baseline of 3.7.**
- COVID-like illness (CLI) activity is low at 9%.
- Influenza percent positivity: 11.8%
- RSV percent positivity: 4%
- 47 pediatric influenza-associated deaths have been reported in the U.S. this season; two of these deaths occurred in Louisiana.

Download the full Week 3 report [here](#).

Cervical Health Awareness Month

January marks Cervical Cancer Health Awareness Month, an opportunity to highlight the importance of prevention and early detection of cervical cancer. There are proactive steps people can take to reduce their risk, including regular screenings such as Pap tests and HPV tests as recommended by healthcare providers.

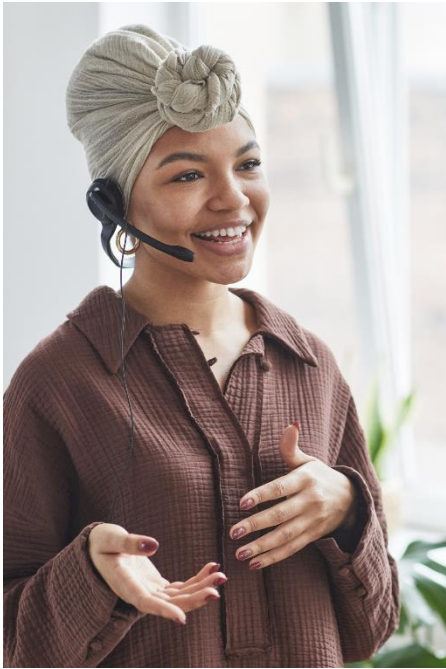


Additionally, the HPV vaccine is a crucial preventive measure that can protect against several strains of the human papillomavirus, a leading cause of cervical cancer.

By staying informed, seeking regular screenings and considering vaccination, individuals can significantly lower their risk of developing cervical cancer and promote overall reproductive health and well-being.

Immunize.org has developed a thorough Q&A that can be used to navigate tough questions pertaining to HPV. Check it out [here](#).

Learn about equitable data practices



Join the [Louisiana Public Health Institute](#) and the [National Network of Public Health Institutes](#) for a discussion on equitable data practices.

This webinar will explain how PeEX, the health information exchange affiliated with the Louisiana Public Health Institute, worked to self-assess its practices and procedures and identified actionable steps toward integrating equity.

From this process, PeEX pulled important lessons from how to engage with internal teams to drive equitable data practices.

Attendees will learn how to build a case for data equity for their team and learn about real-world examples of how integrating equity benefits health data systems. The webinar is both informative and interactive, including portions where group discussion is

encouraged and facilitated through a supplemental handout.

Key Objectives:

- Learn how to communicate about and build a case for data equity
- Learn tools that can be used to integrate equitable data practices into daily work for sustainable equity principles
- Learn about real-world examples of data equity initiatives and lessons learned

Sign up today:

Monday, February 5
11 a.m. – noon

Register [here](#).

Navigating the effects of post-COVID-19 conditions

Tune in to the latest episode of our [“Vax Matters”](#) podcast as we explore the critical topic of long or post-COVID conditions. Clinical neurologist Dr. Michele Longo from the Tulane Center for Clinical Neurosciences at Tulane School of Medicine sheds light on the long-term impacts of COVID-19, both socially and individually.

Dr. Longo brings expertise from her work at the Tulane Neurology Post-COVID Care Clinic, offering valuable insights into the challenges and considerations surrounding post-COVID health.

Don't miss this enlightening discussion on the complexities of COVID-19 recovery and its lasting effects. Listen to the episode [here](#).

Click [here](#) to subscribe, like, comment and share your favorite episodes of "Vax Matters."



An advertisement banner with a background image of a smiling man holding a young girl. The text is overlaid on the right side. It says "Don't lose Medicaid coverage" in large blue letters, followed by "Update your contact info" in white text on a teal background. Below that is the website "www.healthy.la.gov" and the Louisiana Department of Health Medicaid logo.

Was IZ Newsletter Issue 135 informative?

[Yes](#)

No