



Buncombe County Health and Human Services

Aging and Veteran's Services ~ Social Work Services
Public Assistance & Work Support Strategies ~ Public Health
Amanda Stone, MSW
Health and Human Services Director

UPDATE: Bacterial Meningitis and Influenza

As of 2/18/14

1. Bacterial Meningitis:

- Within the past week, Buncombe County has had **2 people diagnosed with bacterial meningitis** (a 28 yo male and a 68 yo female).
 - *Neisseria meningitidis* was the confirmed organism in one and is suspected in the other.
 - Our Disease Control nurses have been providing antibiotic prophylaxis to close contacts of these cases.
- It is rare for us to see 1 case of bacterial meningitis caused by *Neisseria* in our county in a year, let alone 2 cases in 1 week.
 - As far as we know, there is no connection between these 2 cases.
- Interestingly, there has also been a significant increase in the # of cases of bacterial meningitis caused by *N. meningitidis* in NC as a whole in recent months.
 - Epidemiologists at the state are still looking into possible reasons for this increase.
- **Guidance for medical providers:**
 - Encourage meningitis vaccination for indicated populations.
 - Keep bacterial meningitis in your differential when a patient presents with sudden onset of high fever, severe headache, sore/stiff neck.
 - Perform an LP and **then** start antibiotics immediately.
 - **Contact the Disease Control nurses at 250-5109 immediately when you suspect someone of having bacterial meningitis** so that they can begin their investigation and provide prophylaxis to close contacts.

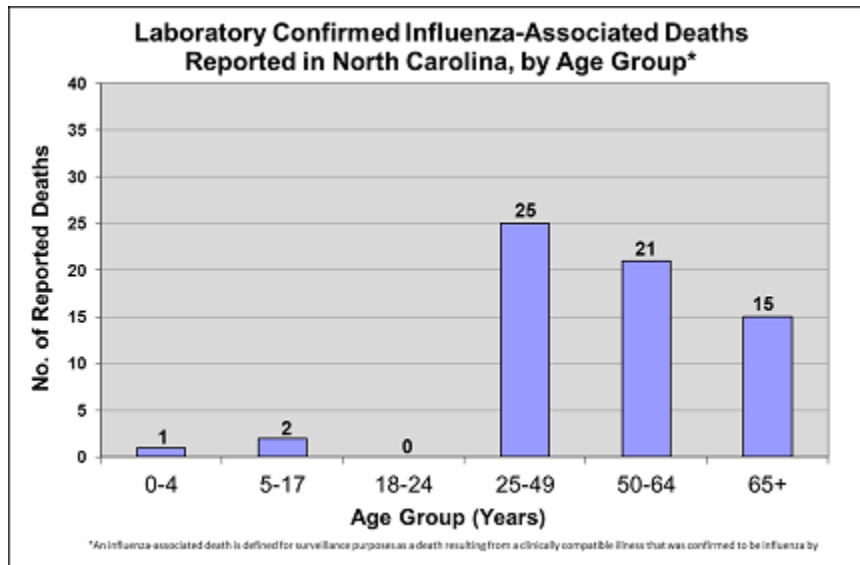
2. Influenza continues to circulate in NC and locally, but the **incidence of influenza-like illness has decreased** during the week ending 2/8/2014.

- As of February 8, 2014, the **total # of flu-associated deaths** reported so far this season in NC is **64**.
 - As you can see from the graph below (from NC DPH), **most of these deaths continue to be in people 25-64 years of age**.
 - We continue to hold at **2 flu-associated deaths in Buncombe County residents this flu season**.

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▪ Please remember that you must report ALL influenza-associated deaths to your local health department.



- Most of the circulating flu virus typed out in NC (and nationwide) continues to be **influenza A (pH1N1)**.
 - The pH1N1 virus tends to affect mostly young and middle-aged adults and has been linked to more severe illness in pregnant/post-partum women and persons with morbid obesity.
- The vaccine continues to be a good match for this circulating strain. Vaccination is encouraged for all people 6 months of age or older until the end of flu season (May).
 - The Buncombe County Dept. of Health continues to have influenza vaccine available, including some no-cost vaccine for uninsured Buncombe County residents who meet certain financial criteria.
- Guidance documents and weekly flu surveillance updates are available at flu.nc.gov. Surveillance updates are posted every Thursday under the “Facts and Figures” tab.

Let me or the Disease Control staff know if you have any questions regarding flu, meningitis or any other communicable disease issue.

Thanks,
Jenni

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