



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

Influenza and Pertussis Update for Medical Providers

March 4, 2014

1. **Pertussis:** We continue to see an **increase in pertussis in Buncombe County.**

- In February there were 3 lab-confirmed cases of pertussis in the County.
- Only 4 days into March we've already had 7 reported cases of pertussis, 2 of which have been lab-confirmed so far.
- **Most of the pertussis has been in children, many of whom have been unvaccinated.**
- **Please contact the Disease Control staff of the Buncombe County Dept. of Health (250-5109; available at all hours, all days) *immediately* if you see someone you SUSPECT of having pertussis.**
 - By doing so, you help us prevent the spread of pertussis in our community.
- **Please remember to tell those patients you suspect or know to have pertussis to stay home under respiratory isolation (no work, no school, no extracurricular activities, no grocery shopping, etc.) until they finish their course of antibiotics.** Until completing their antibiotics, they should definitely **stay away from unvaccinated infants and all pregnant women in their 3rd trimester.**
- Please also continue to **encourage vaccination of your patients with Tdap, including pregnant women in their 3rd trimester.**
 - If you are unable to provide your patients Tdap in your office, please send them to the Buncombe County Department of Health's Immunization Clinic (40 Coxe Ave., Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm, no appointment necessary).

2. **Influenza** continues to circulate in NC and locally, although the overall incidence of influenza-like illness has decreased since the beginning of February.

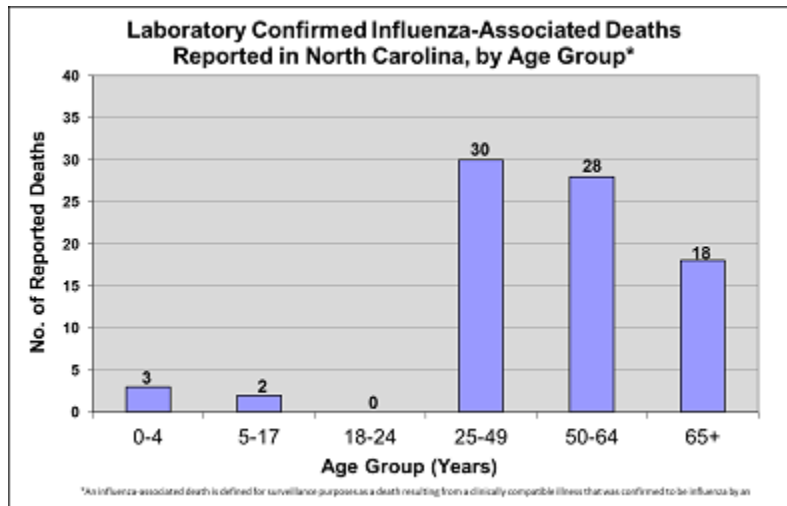
- As of February 22, 2014, the **total # of flu-associated deaths** reported so far this season in NC is 81.
 - As you can see from the graph below (from NC DPH), **most of these deaths continue to be in people 25-64 years of age.**

-MORE-

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HHS Administration p. 828.250.5700 f. 828.250.6235 PO Box 7408 Asheville, NC 28802	Aging & Veteran's Services p. 828.250.5726 f. 828.250.6235 PO Box 7408 Asheville, NC 28802	Social Work Services p. 828.250.5500 f. 828.250.6235 PO Box 7408 Asheville, NC 28802	Public Assistance p. 828.250.5500 f. 828.250.6235 PO Box 7408 Asheville, NC 28802	Public Health p. 828.250.5000 f. 828.250.6235 PO Box 7407 Asheville, NC 28802
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- We continue to hold at **2 flu-associated deaths in Buncombe County residents this flu season.**
 - **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), which is one of the strains in the current vaccine.**
- **Vaccination is encouraged for all people 6 months of age or older until the end of flu season, which can go as late as 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, pertussis or any other communicable disease issue.

Thanks,
 Jenni
 Jennifer Mullendore, MD, MSPH
 Medical Director
 Buncombe County Department of Health and Human Services
 Office: (828) 250-6308
Jennifer.Mullendore@buncombecounty.org