Seasonal Influenza

Jackson County Public Health (JCPH) tracks and analyzes seasonal flu data in Jackson County through a variety of surveillance systems. JCPH gathers influenza-like illness (ILI) visits from hospital emergency departments (ED) and outpatient clinics such as urgent care facilities; percentage of flu positivity test reported to the National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS); the number of flu outbreaks; and regional RSV laboratory test results reported to the Oregon Health Authority. JCPH utilizes this information in order to identify seasonal flu trends and assist hospital systems with their internal flu mitigation protocols. This information also helps JCPH to better communicate to the public about the flu, advocate for people to receive flu immunizations, implement mitigation strategies, and respond to flu outbreaks.

For week 48, November 24 – November 30, 2019, ED visits for ILI are increasing with ILI accounting for 2.0% of ED visits in Jackson County [Figure 1.], which is similar to Oregon overall (2.1%). For ED visits for ILI through the Oregon ESSENCE syndromic surveillance system. The ILI syndrome is based on the presenting chief complaint and is defined as fever and cough and/or sore throat.

Figure 1. Percentage of ED Visits for ILI, Jackson County vs. Oregon 2019-2020

Percent positivity for Jackson & Josephine County influenza tests is increasing, but at a slower rate than the Southern Oregon region or the state of Oregon. Test positivity is lower than the Southern Oregon region as a whole (6.5%) and significantly lower than...
the state of Oregon as a whole (14.0%). Influenza B viruses remain predominant in Southern Oregon and throughout the state.

The symptoms of influenza B are identical to influenza A, but are commonly less severe than influenza A. Influenza B does not cause pandemics due to the fact that humans are almost the exclusive host. This creates a more gradual process of antigenic drift for influenza B,² therefore limiting the generation of new strains.

| Table 1. Influenza Test Results, Jackson & Josephine Counties, 2019-2020 Season |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Current Week                                               | Previous Week    |
| Number of specimens tested                                 | 264              | 213              |
| % positive specimens                                        | 5.3              | 4.7              |
| % Influenza A                                               | 36%              | 20%              |
| % Influenza B                                               | 64%              | 80%              |

Influenza outbreaks and pediatric deaths are required to be reported to the Local Public Health Authority. There are three ways to report a flu outbreak or influenza (laboratory-confirmed) death of a person <18 years of age to Jackson County Public Health:

1. **Electronic** – This is a web-based confidential reporting system through the Oregon Health Authority. These reports will be automatically routed to Jackson County Public Health. Click on the hyperlink to access this option, Web-based Confidential Oregon Morbidity Report.

2. **Call Jackson County Public Health Communicable Disease** – Clinicians can call and make a report 24 hours a day. During business hours call 541-774-8045, and after-hours call 541-618-4651.

3. **Fax** – Clinicians can fax a report to Jackson County Public Health using the Oregon Confidential Morbidity Form (please click on the hyperlink to access this form). The form should be faxed 541-774-7954.

**Oregon Disease Reporting: How do Clinicians Report to Jackson County Public Health?**

By law,³ Oregon clinicians **MUST** report diagnoses of the specified infections, diseases and conditions to local public health departments. Both lab-confirmed and clinically suspect cases are reportable.³ Jackson County Public Health relies on clinicians to report within the required time frames of immediately or within 24 hours (OAR 333-018-0015). Importantly, please contact Jackson County Public Health immediately if you have a suspect case of measles or Neisseria meningitidis.³⁴

The importance of disease reporting enables appropriate public health follow-up for your patients, helps identify outbreaks, provides a better understanding of morbidity patterns, and may even save lives.³ HIPAA does not prohibit you from reporting protected health
information to public health authorities for the purpose of preventing or controlling diseases, including public health surveillance and investigation.3,4

Ways clinicians can report to Jackson County Public Health
Clinicians should make their report to Jackson County Public Health. The report should, at a minimum, include the patient’s name, home address, phone number, date of birth, sex, diagnosis and date of symptom onset. Most reporting should be made within one working day of the diagnosis, but there are several important expectations, please print and review the Oregon Disease Reporting Posters for clinicians, laboratories, healthcare-associated infections, and CRE.3 There are three ways to report communicable disease to Jackson County Public health:

1. **Electronic** – This is a web-based confidential reporting system through the Oregon Health Authority. These reports will be automatically routed to Jackson County Public Health. Click on the hyperlink to access this option, Web-based Confidential Oregon Morbidity Report.

2. **Call Jackson County Public Health Communicable Disease** – Clinicians can call and make a report 24 hours a day. During business hours call 541-774-8045, and after-hours call 541-618-4651.

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“The mission of Jackson County Health and Human Services is to plan, coordinate and provide public services that protect and promote the health and well-being of county residents.

REFERENCES