



Pat Quinn, Governor
Damon T. Arnold, M.D., M.P.H., Director

122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 7000 • Chicago, IL 60603-6119 • www.idph.state.il.us

Date: Tuesday, March 03, 2009
From: Craig S. Conover, MD, Medical Director, Office of Health Protection
Kenneth Soyemi, MD, Asst Medical Director, Office of Health Protection
Karen McMahan, Chief, Immunization Section
To: Illinois Health Care Providers
Re: Pediatric Influenza Deaths and Bacterial Coinfections

At least one death among children with influenza has occurred in Illinois during each of the recent influenza seasons. According to the CDC, during the current influenza season, 17 pediatric influenza-related deaths have occurred nationwide as of February 21. Bacterial coinfections were confirmed in 10 of the 17 children reported, and eight of the 10 children who had bacterial coinfections were age 12 and older.

Illinois Dept. of Public Health advises health care providers to do the following:

- **Consider secondary bacterial infections (e.g. pneumonia due to MRSA, MSSA, Group A *Streptococcus*, or *Streptococcus pneumoniae*) in patients, including children, with influenza who appear severely ill, or are not improving as expected.**
- **Consider influenza in the differential diagnosis when evaluating patients with community acquired pneumonia.**
- **Vaccinate children against influenza. Vaccination remains the most effective way to prevent pediatric influenza-associated deaths.**
- **Report deaths among children with laboratory-confirmed influenza to the local health department as soon as possible.**

For more information contact your local health department, or the IDPH Immunization Section, at 1- 800-526-4372

Resources

National influenza surveillance reports: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>

Illinois influenza surveillance reports: <http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/fluupdate08-09.htm>

Antiviral prescribing: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/index.htm>

Improving public health, one community at a time

printed on recycled paper