

During the 2007-08 season, influenza activity was fairly high both locally and nationwide. The higher activity may have been in part due to reduced effectiveness in two of the three strains of the vaccine that were less than optimally matched to circulating viruses (more detailed explanation can be found at [www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/season.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/season.htm)). For the 2008-09 season, the vaccine contains three new influenza virus strains (A/Brisbane/59/2007(H1N1)-like virus; A/Brisbane/10/2007 (H3N2)-like virus; B/Florida/4/2006-like virus) that research indicates will cause the most illness during this year's flu season (more detailed information can be found at the [World Health Organization](http://World Health Organization) website). Information regarding vaccination, including ACIP recommendations, can be found at the [CDC seasonal flu](http://CDC seasonal flu) website).

In 2007-08, locally, there were no discernable peaks in Pneumonia and Influenza mortality figures although it does appear that the numbers of deaths were higher from February through April. Other local data sources indicate that flu activity peaked anywhere between the 5<sup>th</sup> (week ending February 2, 2008) and 7<sup>th</sup> (week ending February 16, 2008) week of 2008. Nationally, flu activity increased slowly from mid-December through the end of the year with more rapid increases during January and through the week ending February 16. Flu activity peaked in mid-February and then decreased through the end of the flu season on May 17.

### **Pneumonia and Influenza (P&I) Mortality**

Locally in the 2007-08 flu season, the percentage of P&I deaths in Franklin County was highest (12.3%) during week 16, the week ending April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (Figure 1).

### **Influenza Morbidity and Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) Reports**

The percentage of patient visits to Franklin County sentinel providers for influenza-like-illness (ILI) increased in the 4<sup>th</sup> week of 2008 (week ending January 26), peaked on the 5<sup>th</sup> week (week ending February 2, 2008), and gradually declined in the next 3 weeks. The number and percentage of patient visits to BioSense hospitals coded as ILI subsyndrome also started to increase in the 4<sup>th</sup> week of 2008, peaked in the 7<sup>th</sup> week (week ending February 16), and gradually decreased till the end of the season (Figure 2).

### **Columbus Public Schools (CPS): Absenteeism**

The percent of Columbus Public Schools students absent was highest (11.2%) the week ending February 23, 2008 (Figure 3).

### **Laboratory Surveillance**

The 2007-08 season was the third season implementing comprehensive laboratory surveillance in Franklin County. The percentage of positive labs started to increase at the beginning of the year and peaked on the 6<sup>th</sup> week of 2008 (week ending February 9). From January 1<sup>st</sup> through the end of reporting, a total of 9,451 specimens were tested for influenza and 2,701 (29%) were positive, which is higher than the percentages during similar times the previous seasons



Franklin County



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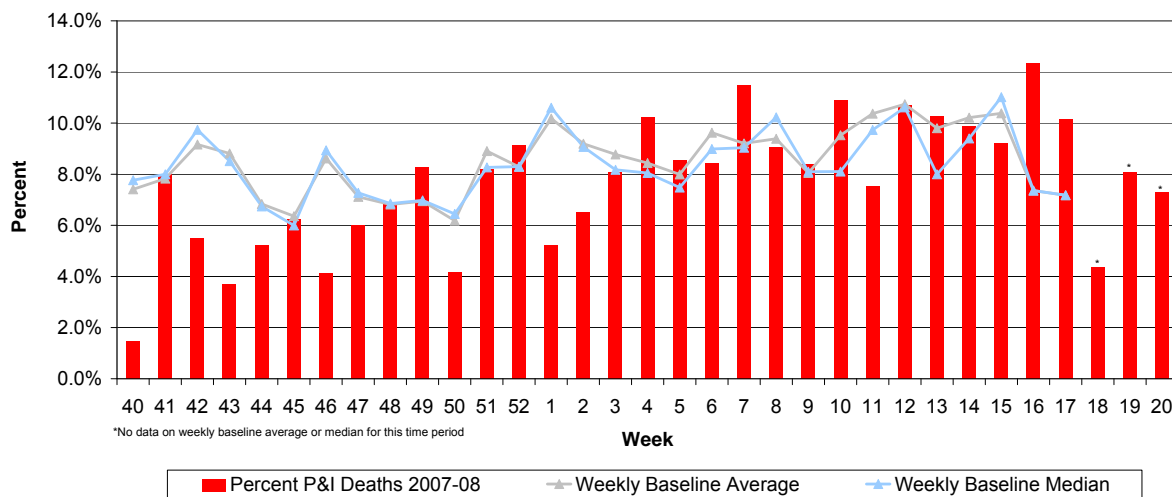
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(2006-07 = 21%, 2005-06 = 22%). Nationally, during a similar time period, the World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) laboratories tested 168,350 specimens for influenza viruses, of which 37,683 (22%) were positive (Figure 4).

**Emergency Department Visits and Over-the-Counter Medication Sales**

For the 2007-08 season, there was a rapid increase in percentage of respiratory and constitutional ED visits starting on the 4<sup>th</sup> week of 2008 (week ending January 26), and a peak in the 6<sup>th</sup> week (week ending February 9). Compared to the previous 2 seasons, the peak was slightly earlier. In general, the OTC cough and cold, pediatric electrolyte, and thermometer sales followed the same increases and peak as the ED visits stated above, although additional increases and peaks are also noted in late December, 2007 (Figures 5 & 6).

**Figure 1: Percentage of Deaths due to Pneumonia and Influenza  
Columbus, Ohio 2007-08**



**Figure 2: Percentage of Local, National and North East Central Region ILI Outpatient visits and Percentage of Franklin County Resident BioSense Hospital ED visits coded\* as ILI sub-syndrome, 2007-08**

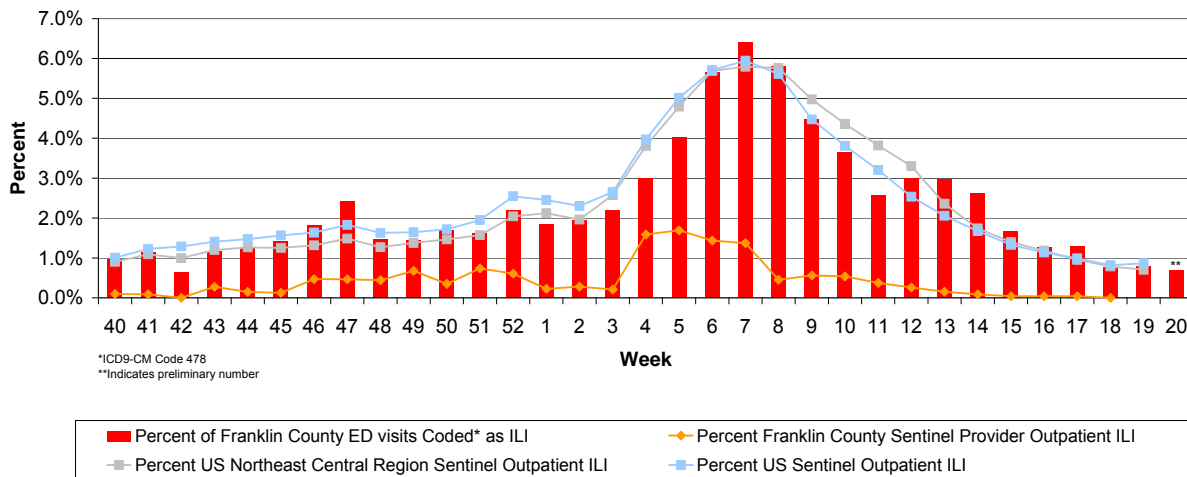




Figure 3: Percentage of Students Absent from Columbus Public Schools 2007-08

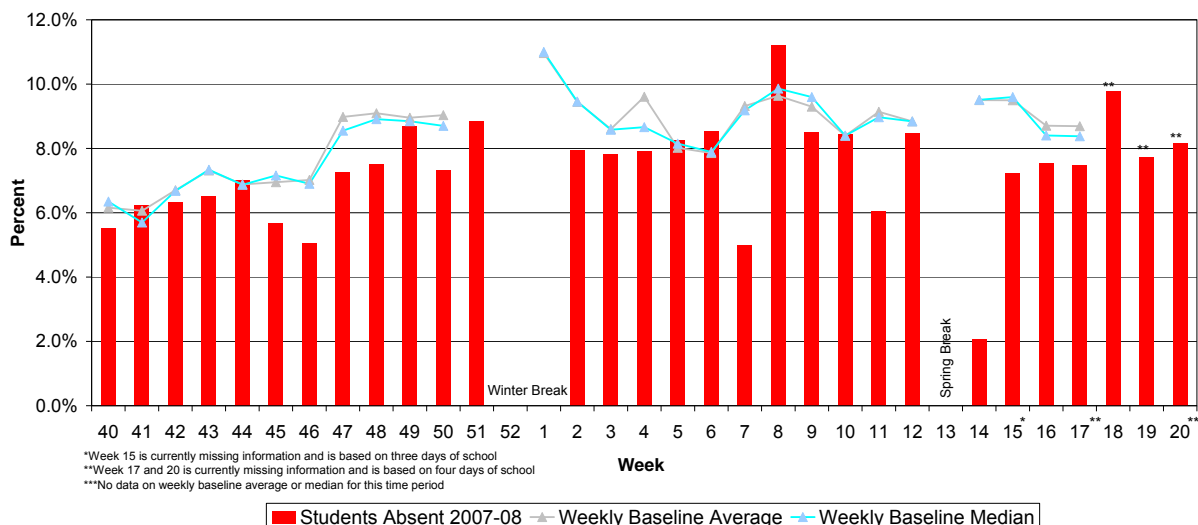


Figure 4: Percentage of Local Reporting, National and East North Central Region Laboratory Positive Influenza Tests by Week, 2007-08

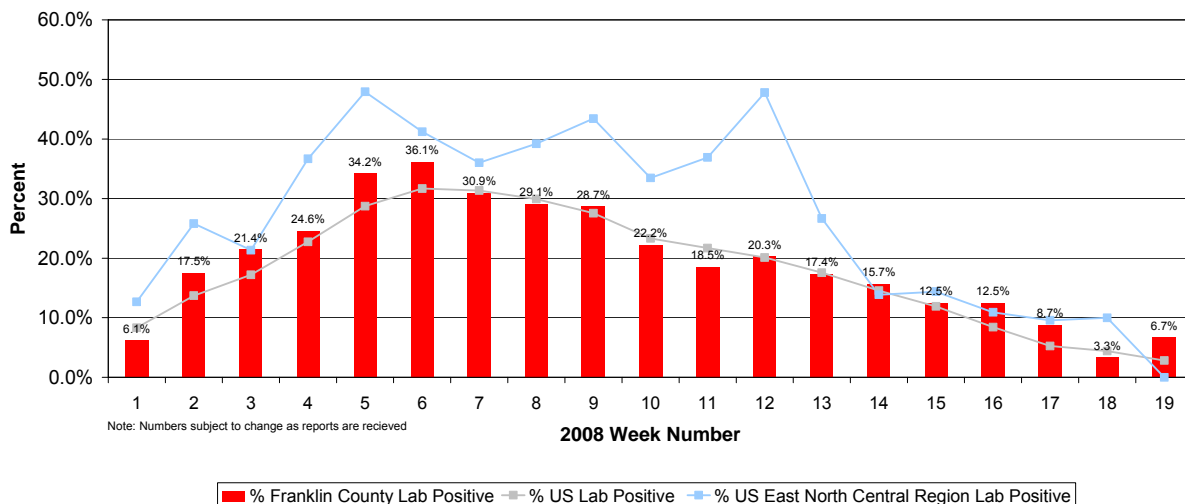
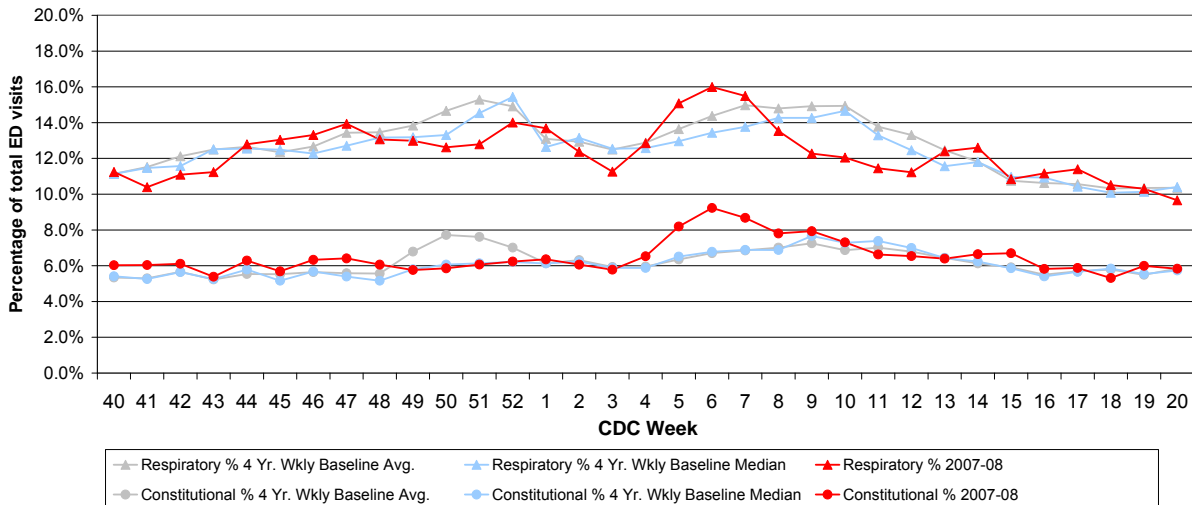


Figure 5: Respiratory and Constitutional ED Visits and 4 Yr. Weekly Baseline Averages and Medians, 2007-08, Franklin County, OH



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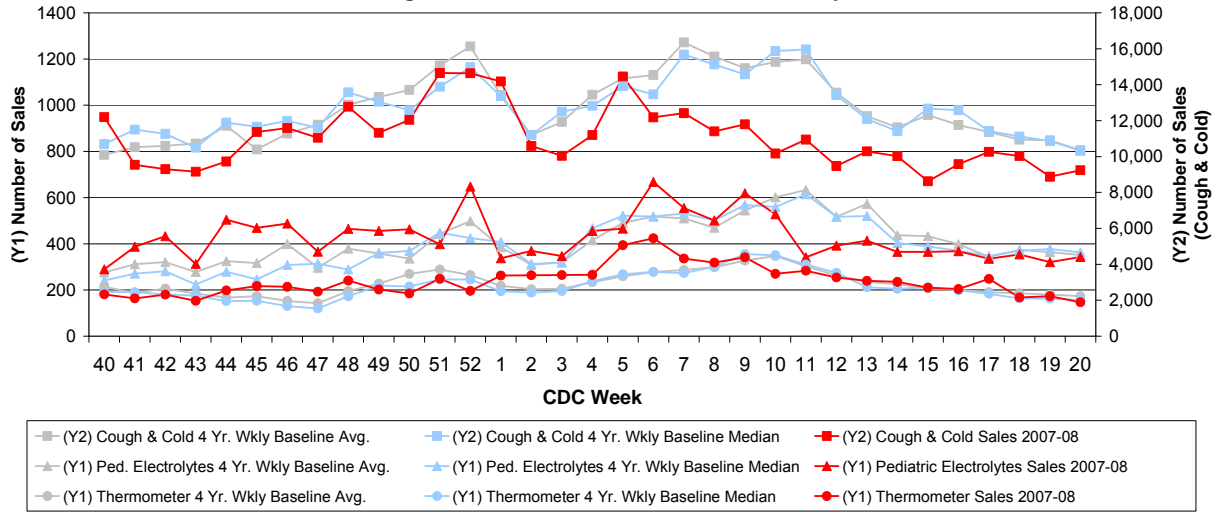
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Figure 6: Selected Number of Over-the-Counter Medication Sales and 4 Yr. Weekly Baseline Averages and Medians, 2007-08, Franklin County, OH



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