

Influenza Surveillance Activities – Pregnant/Postpartum Mortality

Influenza-Associated Pregnant/Postpartum Mortality Overview

No longer an operative surveillance system – retained for historical perspective only

Reporting of influenza-associated deaths in women who were pregnant or up to six weeks postpartum was an ad hoc surveillance activity requested by the CDC during the 2009 pandemic and extended through the 2010-2011 influenza season.

This surveillance was discontinued at the end of May 2011. While the surveillance was occurring, influenza-associated pregnant/postpartum deaths were to be reported to the health department within one working day of identification. Healthcare providers, infection preventionists, medical examiners, justices of the peace or any other persons who determined that the death was associated with influenza should have contacted their local or regional health department by phone or by fax.

An influenza-associated pregnant/postpartum death was defined for surveillance purposes as a death in a person who was pregnant or up to six weeks postpartum resulting from a clinically compatible illness that was confirmed to be influenza by an appropriate laboratory or rapid diagnostic test. No period of complete recovery (return to baseline health) was allowed between the illness and death. The following tests were acceptable:

- Influenza virus isolation in tissue cell culture from respiratory specimens
- Reverse-transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing of respiratory specimens
- Immunofluorescent antibody staining (direct or indirect) of respiratory specimens
- Rapid influenza diagnostic testing of respiratory specimens
- Immunohistochemical (IHC) staining for influenza viral antigens in respiratory tract tissue from autopsy specimens
- Four-fold rise in influenza hemagglutination inhibition (HI) antibody

During the pandemic and throughout the 2010-2011 influenza season, the health department used the CDC investigation form for influenza-associated pregnant/postpartum deaths to investigate and report cases. If a health department chooses to continue investigating these cases, the health department can use the DSHS General Influenza Investigation Form and the section on pregnant/postpartum in the DSHS Influenza Investigation Form Supplemental Pages.