

EpiCenter

**Palm Beach County Health Department
Division of Epidemiology & Disease Control
1050 West 15th Street, Riviera Beach, FL 33404**



Weekends/Evenings: (561) 840-4500 Website: <http://www.pbchd.com>

January 2005

NEW TEMPORARY LOCATION—COMMUNICABLE DISEASES SECTION

West Palm Beach Health Center
Special Needs Room
1150 45th Street
West Palm Beach, FL 33407
Phone: (561) 514-5369
Fax: (561) 514-5544

Epidemiology Staff

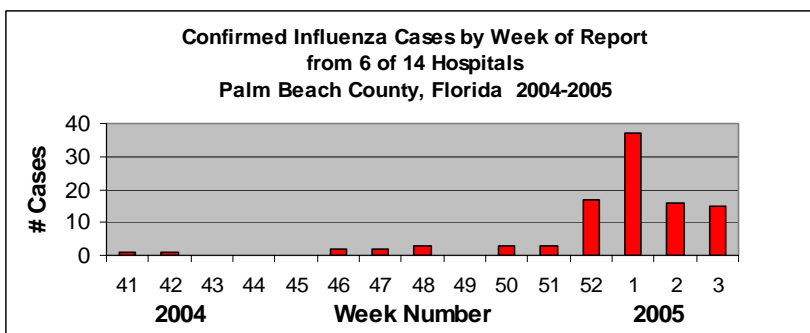
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Palm Beach County Health Department
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Nursing Program Specialist/Coordinator
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It's Not Too Late To Vaccinate

Influenza is not a disease reportable to the Palm Beach County Health Department, but during the influenza season of October 2004 to May 2005, voluntary reports were requested from different sentinel sites. The voluntary reports are provided by the Influenza Surveillance Network of Palm Beach County, which is comprised of health care providers, influenza sentinel providers, laboratories, hospitals, nursing homes and the health department.

The number of hospitals reporting confirmed cases increased from 4 in weeks 51 and 52, to 5 in week 1, and then to 6 in week 2. Thus far, two cases have been confirmed by viral culture and the remainder by rapid diagnostic testing.



The purpose of the surveillance is threefold: 1) to determine which viruses are circulating, 2) to determine the intensity and impact of influenza activity, and 3) to detect any unusual events such as large or severe influenza outbreaks.

As a result of the continuous and consistent monitoring, the influenza surveillance program provides data to assist in vaccine strain selection, treatment decisions, public health resource allocation, influenza prevention and control policy, pandemic planning, and general information for the public and media.

We are still in the influenza season and it's not too late to vaccinate. Call Joan Bartleman at the Palm Beach County Health Department, Immunization Program, 561-840-0147 to request influenza vaccine for your patients. (continued)

We are grateful to the Influenza Surveillance Network of Palm Beach County for voluntary influenza reporting and sincerely thank the following community partners:

Dr. Johanna Albrecht

Dr. R. P. Busto

Dr. David Dodson

Dr. Timothy Horn

Dr. Sameh Karaz

Dr. Nelson Olaquibet

Dr. Robert Schramm

Dr. Barry Schultz

Dr. William Stager

Dr. Alan Stern

Bethesda Memorial Hospital

Boca Raton Community Hospital

Delray Medical Center

Jupiter Medical Center

St. Mary's Medical Center

West Boca Medical Center

Abbey Delray North

Abbey Delray South

Avante at Boca Raton

Avante At Lake Worth

Azalea Court

Boca Raton Rehabilitation Center

Boulevard Manor Nursing Center

Boynton Healthcare Center

Edgewater Pointe Estates Medical Facility

Glades Health Care Center

Heartland Health Care and Rehabilitation of Boca

Joseph L. Morse Geriatric Center

Jupiter Care Center

Lakeside Village

Manor Care of Boca Raton

Manor Care of West Palm Beach

Medicana

Menorah House

Regents Park

Rehabilitation Center of the Palm Beaches

Renova Health Center

Stratford Court Health Care

Sutton Place Care Center

Tequesta Terrace

Waterford Health Center

Whitehall Nursing Home

Willow Brooke Court at St. Andrews Estate North

Epi's Still Grounded After 2004 Hurricanes

The Palm Beach County Health Department (PBCHD) sent volunteers from various divisions to Florida's west coast in response to Hurricane Charley. The Division of Epidemiology & Disease Control (Epi) sent a team of two volunteers, M-Teresa Bonafonte, PhD, MPH, MS; Florida Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer and JoEllen Alvarez, RN, MPH; Nursing Program Specialist/Coordinator. They joined forces with volunteers from counties throughout the state to work on the "Epi Response Team for Hurricane Charley."

They worked on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Rapid Needs Assessment Team, interviewing individuals over 60 years of age, whose homes had been damaged, who were without power and needed services such as home delivered meals, or who needed assistance with a medical need such as having prescription medications filled. The volunteers also assisted in routine epidemiology surveillance for the county health departments most affected by Charley: Charlotte, Hardee, and DeSoto, by visiting hospitals, clinics, and shelters in their assigned counties.

After Hurricane Frances made landfall on Florida's east coast, Epi set up surveillance with Palm Beach County long term care facilities to determine if there were problems regarding garbage disposal, sewage back-up, adequate water for residents, or adequate power for respirators. A PBCHD team from Epi and Environmental Health made daily visits to nursing homes and shelters to provide assistance. Surveillance was set up with area hospitals, Health Department clinics and shelters to identify illnesses, injuries, and deaths that were attributed to the hurricane. Division staff worked in the Special Needs Shelter and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The process was repeated two weeks later with Hurricane Jeanne.

Epi staff worked hard to continue the primary task of disease control and prevention throughout the disaster recovery period even though our office in Riviera Beach was damaged during the storms. We are now working in a temporary location at the West Palm Beach Health Center on 45th Street.

We are grateful to our many community partners who worked with us during the difficult period after the storms. Epi is back to "business as usual," but we will never be quite the same. We are a more experienced team and one that is more cohesive. We are relieved that the summer of Charley, Frances, and Jeanne is past and feel more prepared for the many lessons learned from the experience.