Erie County Department of Health
Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
GALE R. BURSTEIN, MD, MPH, FAAP
COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

HEALTH ADVISORY #374 **October 27, 2026**

NYS Department of Health Commissioner Declares Influenza Prevalent in the State

Please distribute to Healthcare Providers, Hospitals, Laboratories, Emergency Rooms, Community Health Centers, College Health Centers, Community-Based Organizations, Family Planning Providers, and Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Pediatric, Adolescent Medicine, Infectious Disease, and Primary Care Providers

SUMMARY

For the week ending 10/17/2026, 3526 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza were reported in New York State, with 59 of 62 counties, including Erie, reporting increased or sustained numbers of cases. It is unusual to see this level of influenza activity this early in the season. Therefore, the New York State Department of Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald declares influenza to be prevalent in New York State for the 2026-27 influenza season, as of the date of this announcement. In accordance with Section 2.59 of the New York State Sanitary Code (10 NYCRR § 2.59), all healthcare and residential facilities and agencies regulated pursuant to Article 28, 36, or 40 of the public health law, shall ensure that all personnel, as defined in the regulation, not vaccinated against influenza for the current influenza season wear a surgical or procedure mask while in areas where patients or residents are typically present.

This declaration shall remain in effect until the New York State Department of Health Commissioner declares influenza no longer prevalent in New York State.

At this time, please activate your facility's or agency's policy and procedure to ensure compliance with 10 NYCRR § 2.59.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the regulation and other resources are available at http://health.ny.gov/FluMaskReg.

For more information please direct questions to FluMaskReg@health.ny.gov.

Respiratory surveillance reports for influenza, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are updated weekly during the respiratory season (October through the following May):

- **Erie County**: https://www3.erie.gov/health/erie-county-weekly-respiratory-surveillance-reports
- **NYS**: https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/surveillance/

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Health Category Definitions:

Health Alert FLASH: conveys the highest level of importance due to a large-scale, catastrophic public health emergency; warrants immediate action or attention
Health Alert Priority: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention to a health problem or situation
Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action
Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary

The Erie County Department of Health does not provide medical advice. The information provided on the Erie County Department of Health website is not an attempt to practice medicine and is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. It is for informational purposes only. Always seek the advice of your personal physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or issue. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of the content found on the Erie County Department of Health website or this correspondence.

The ECDOH Health Alert & Advisory System is an e-mail notification system designed to alert community partners about important health related information. You can sign up to receive alerts & advisories at https://www3.erie.gov/health/form/health-alert-registration.