

## Seqirus Media Monitoring

### 31st Dec 2019

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**Best Wishes for a happy and peaceful New Year!**

**Your next newsletter will be on January 3rd, 2020**

#### **Seqirus mentions**

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**No News Recorded**

#### **Industry News**

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##### **ID Year in Review: FDA Approvals of 2019**

ContagionLive takes a look back at approvals, clearances, and authorizations granted by the US Food and Drug Administration for infectious disease products in 2019. Among these was Baloxavir Marboxil: the FDA approved a supplemental New Drug Application for baloxavir marboxil (Xofluza) for the treatment of influenza in individuals who are at increased risk of developing flu-related complications. The FDA also approved Sanofi's Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent for use in adults 65 years of age and older. The vaccine will be made available for the 2020-2021 influenza season.

<https://www.contagionlive.com/news/id-year-in-review-fda-approvals-of-2019>

#### **Pandemic Influenza News**

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**No News Recorded**

#### **Academic studies**

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##### **Health Care Workers Often Work Despite Illness**

Hospitals and other health care organizations invest untold resources in their ever-present battle against health care-associated infections, but new research suggests there's one risk health care workers routinely downplay: themselves. A study released this summer found 95% of ill health care workers reported working at least 1 day while symptomatic. The research is based on thousands of illness diaries by health care workers at 9 Canadian hospitals during 4 flu seasons between 2010 and 2014. Sophia Chiu, MD, Medical Office in the Division of Field Studies and Engineering, at the U.S. CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health told Contagion that the CDC also found high numbers of health care workers work while ill. That survey, of 1900 health care workers, found 40% reported working while experiencing flu-like symptoms during the 2014-15 flu season.

<https://www.contagionlive.com/news/health-care-workers-often-work-despite-illness>

##### **Virtual reality can boost flu vaccination rates**

Virtual reality could help flu vaccination rates, according to a new study which finds that virtual reality could provide a path to increased acceptance of the influenza shot. This finding is based on a study undertaken at the University of Georgia, where a virtual reality simulation was used to demonstrate how influenza spreads. Through this the impact of the virus on others in a population was shown. The aim of the simulation was to see if this would encourage more people to get a flu shot. Based on the success of the trial, the researchers think the application of virtual reality offers a practical way forwards.

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/tech-and-science/science/virtual-reality-can-boost-flu-vaccination-rates/article/564364>

#### **Pediatric influenza news**

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### **Family sends warning after 9-year-old Kansas girl dies of flu**

Last week, a 9-year-old became one of the many Kansans to get sick with the flu, but her case turned deadly. The fifth-grader from Hiawatha died on Dec. 22 in Lincoln, Nebraska, while she was visiting family there for the Christmas holiday. KTKA reports the girl's family say she was diagnosed with the flu at a Lincoln hospital on Dec. 21, released, then saw her condition worsen the next day. Now her family is sharing her memory in hopes that it sends a message to others.

<http://www.kake.com/story/41505194/family-sends-warning-after-9-year-old-kansas-girl-dies-of-flu>

### **Flu kills two in Florida, multiple outbreaks reported**

Two Florida infants lost their lives to the flu during the first week on December, the first flu related deaths of the year in Florida, according to the Florida Department of Health. The department says neither child had been vaccinated. The number of Florida flu related cases being reported is higher than this time last year. During the same week four outbreaks were reported in Central and South Florida, three at facilities for adults and at one facility serving children.

<https://www.wctv.tv/content/news/Flu-kills-two-in-Florida-multiple-outbreaks-reported-566574631.html>

### **Devon parents warn of the importance of flu jabs after death of nine-year-old son**

The parents of a nine-year-old boy from Exeter who died after contracting flu- are calling on parents to vaccinate their children. Coby Simons tragically died of pneumonia on January 24, 2018- just 48 hours after coming down with the flu. He was just outside the age group for being eligible for the free flu jab which schools provide. The #ThumbsUpForCoby social media campaign launched last year, urging parents to vaccinate their children. This resulted in an additional 1500 children aged between 2 and 3, being vaccinated.

<https://www.devonlive.com/news/devon-news/devon-parents-warn-importance-flu-3689066>

### **Long Island School Districts Push Back On HPV, Flu Vaccine Mandates**

In the U.S., Southampton schools have joined a growing number of districts on Long Island that oppose legislation to add more mandatory school vaccinations. One bill requires children be immunized against HPV. Another bill mandates flu shots. Southampton schools wrote to state health committee members to kill the measures when they reconvene in January. The district says the requirements are an "erosion of parental rights." Several school districts also question the overall effectiveness of flu vaccines.

<https://www.wshu.org/post/long-island-school-districts-push-back-hpv-flu-vaccine-mandates>

### **Influenza catches on early this year in Minnesota**

Influenza-like illnesses reported in Minnesota schools in mid-December have surpassed the four previous flu seasons for the same week, data from the Minnesota Department of Health shows. There were 167 Minnesota schools that reported new school outbreaks during the week ending in Dec. 21, up from 60 the week before, Altogether 287 schools have reported this flu season, and at least four of those schools included St. Cloud elementary schools, St. Cloud Area School District lead nurse Jessica Vos said.

<https://www.chron.com/news/article/Influenza-catches-on-early-this-year-in-Minnesota-14934015.php>

### **Over 65's influenza news**

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#### **No News Recorded**

### **General Influenza News**

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#### **News Scan for Dec 30, 2019 - Views on flu vaccine**

An internet survey conducted during the 2017-18 flu season showed that 86.3% of US adults thought the vaccine was safe and 73.0% thought it was effective, with slightly less confidence among younger adults, according to a new study in Vaccine. 2020 will mark a decade since the

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended every American 6 months and older receive an annual flu shot. But despite the recommendation and the favorable attitudes found in this study, less than 45% of American adults report getting vaccinated each year.

<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2019/12/news-scan-dec-30-2019>

### **Health Ministry Transfers 45000 Flu Shots in Effort to Meet Surging Demand**

In Israel, following reports of three fatalities and many other serious cases from the flu in recent days, the surge in demand for vaccinations has the Health Ministry scrambling to keep up. According to Channel 12, as of Monday the country had only two days more of vaccination stockpiles left, while the ministry waits for resupply. Health officials said they were transferring some 45,000 vaccines to the three major health funds — Clalit, Meuhedet and Leumit—to be available as of Tuesday. Around 1.8 million Israelis have been vaccinated against the flu this season, many of them for the first time.

<https://hamodia.com/2019/12/30/health-ministry-transfers-45000-flu-shots-effort-meet-surging-demand/>

### **Israel low on flu vaccines as virulent strain hits**

In Israel, at least 100 people have been hospitalized in a serious condition with complications from the flu virus so far this winter, compared to just 45 last year; just 150,000 vaccines remain, leaving some 7 million Israelis to potentially spend the rest of the winter unvaccinated. Israelis turning to health maintenance organizations (HMOs) to receive flu vaccines said on Sunday they were being turned down due to shortages of influenza shots to combat a strain proving more harmful than those of previous years.

[https://www.ynetnews.com/health\\_science/article/BJNdmv1U](https://www.ynetnews.com/health_science/article/BJNdmv1U)

### **Opinion: When border officials brought in a detained child with flu, our hospital faced a dilemma**

Donna Woods is an emergency medicine physician at Tucson Medical Center. Dona Kim Murphey is director of health initiatives for Project Lifeline. They write that 'Physicians have grown increasingly concerned in recent months about the state of health care in migrant detention facilities, particularly for children. Earlier this month, the two of us had a firsthand look at one part of the problem.' 'The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended that migrants over the age of 6 months be given flu vaccinations "at the earliest point of entry." But immigration officials have refused to do so. This makes no sense, especially given the kind of severely overcrowded conditions in which many migrants are held. Such conditions create a perfect environment for the spread of communicable diseases'

<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2019-12-30/opinion-border-officials-detained-child-flu-hospital-dilemma>

### **HSE In Midlands Advising It's Not Too Late To Get Flu Vaccine**

In Ireland, HSE Midlands is warning that the risk of flu is still serious for certain members of the public. 18 flu-related deaths have been reported so far this winter - with more expected. Dr. Douglas Hamilton, public health specialist in the midlands, says the high numbers are due to the winter season starting in November, earlier than usual. Over-65s are the most at risk group says it's not too late to get the vaccine

<https://www.midlands103.com/news/midlands-news/hse-in-midlands-advising-its-not-too-late-to-get-flu-vaccine/>

### **Pharmacists recommend flu vaccine this holiday season**

So far this flu season, nearly 1.2-million Albertans have received the flu vaccination. Influenza immunization rates have continued to increase since 2016, with 31 per cent of Albertans getting immunized during the 2018-19 season, totalling more than 1.3-million doses of influenza vaccine administered. According to data released by Alberta Health Services, there have been 445 lab-confirmed cases of Influenza A, 466 lab-confirmed cases of Influenza B, 181 hospital admissions and three deaths across Alberta so far this flu season.

<https://www.airdrietoday.com/local-news/pharmacists-recommend-flu-vaccine-this-holiday-season-1984176>

### **Worry over county's flu vaccination statistics**

More than a third of the people eligible for free flu vaccines in Worcestershire did not take them up last winter, figures show. The uptake rate among Worcestershire's senior residents was better – but at 75%, around 34,000 over 65s still went without. Now doctors are urging people to protect themselves and their families from flu amid warnings that new cases may yet peak over the busy Christmas period. NHS England data shows that 228,348 people were eligible for free flu vaccines in Worcestershire last winter – but only 65% of them had one.

<https://www.worcesternews.co.uk/news/18127856.worry-countys-flu-vaccination-statistics/>

### **Influenza A Virus Could Soon Begin Picking Up**

The presence of influenza A is slowly picking up across the United States, says Dr. Bryan Lewis, a professor at the University of Virginia, according to Accuweather. Lewis doesn't know for certain when the type A strain will begin surging, but he suspects that it will begin making its influence felt near late December. Influenza B can be a menace, especially for kids; however, it tends to cause less hospitalizations and deaths than Influenza A. Regardless of how Influenza A comes on, it's safe to say that the 2019-2020 flu season will be the third straight to display negative features. The 2017-2018 flu season featured recording-breaking hospitalizations and the 2018-2019 flu season was longer than average.

<https://www.cleanlink.com/news/article/Influenza-A-Virus-Could-Soon-Begin-Picking-Up--24965>

### **Burden of disease**

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#### **Cases of Flu Continue to Mount Across America**

Flu continues to spread throughout the United States and has reached elevated levels in nearly every state. "We're still seeing an increase in activity, which is what we've been experiencing over the last few weeks," said Dr. Scott Epperson, an epidemiologist in the influenza division of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. So far the CDC estimates that nearly 5 million Americans have been sickened, 39,000 have been hospitalized, and 2,100 have died from flu complications. Twenty-two children have died from flu -- up three from a week ago.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/health-news/articles/2019-12-30/cases-of-flu-continue-to-mount-across-america>

#### **Flu Rates Rising, Pediatric Deaths Double Compared to 2018: CDC**

The proportion of outpatient visits for influenzalike illness rose from 3.9% to 5.1% during the week ending December 21 in the United States — 8 weeks earlier than last season, when it peaked at 5.1% during the week ending February 16 (week 7), according to a report from the CDC. At least 2100 have died so far this season, including 22 children. The number of children who have died from influenza and pneumonia is twice as high as it was last season at this time.

<https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/923215>

#### **DHEC reports 11 flu-related deaths in SC so far this season**

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control has reported 11 flu-related deaths as the peak season continues. At Trident Medical Center there were a reported 15 hospitalizations in the last four weeks. Doctors say that covering your cough, washing your hands, and getting the flu shot are the best ways to keep from getting the flu.

<https://www.live5news.com/2019/12/30/dhec-reports-flu-related-deaths-sc-so-far-this-season/>

#### **Minister says early flu season has led to more people on trolleys**

In Ireland, the number of people on trolleys in hospitals has been extraordinarily high and extraordinarily disappointing, the Minister for Health Simon Harris has said. Speaking following a briefing from the HSE's winter oversight group on Monday, he said there were indications the flu season had arrived earlier than normal. HSE assistant national director for public health Dr Kevin Kelleher confirmed 19 people have died so far this season as a result of the flu virus.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/minister-blames-flu-season-arriving-early-for-more-people-on-trolleys-1.4127613>

### **Flu season has hit peak over Christmas and New Year period - HSE**

In Ireland, the Health Service Executive has said it believed the flu season has hit its peak over the Christmas and New Year period - six weeks earlier than in recent years. Speaking on RTÉ's News at One, HSE Assistant National Director for Public Health Dr Kevin Kelleher said however that it is expected the flu will be around for another four to five weeks. Figures released at a briefing for the Government's Winter Plan shows a significant increase in the number of people over 75 who attended hospital in the week leading up to Christmas Eve. There was an increase of 25% compared to the same week last year.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/2019/1230/1103606-hse-flu/>

### **Harris urges flu patients to self-treat and avoid hospital emergency departments**

In Ireland, Health Minister Simon Harris has urged people suffering from flu to self-treat and avoid hospital emergency departments if they can. Mr Harris made the call as the HSE and the Department of Health gave an update on its response to the winter flu season. While hospital ED attendances and admissions have reduced compared to last week they are still significantly higher than at the same time last year. Mr Harris advised people to go to [undertheweather.ie](http://undertheweather.ie) to find out about self-treatment. He said that people who have a flu infection should not necessarily visit their GP surgery as they may spread the virus.

<https://www.independent.ie/breaking-news/irish-news/harris-urges-flu-patients-to-self-treat-and-avoid-hospital-emergency-departments-38822213.html>

### **Flu season gets started across Finland**

Even as the New Year is about to begin, it's still not too late to get vaccinated against influenza in Finland, according to the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL). "By no means is it unnecessary or too late to get the jab," THL's influenza expert Niina Ikonen, told news service STT. The institute, which tracks influenza incidents across the country, said that it has already seen cases across all regions and age groups.

[https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/flu\\_season\\_gets\\_started\\_across\\_finland/11137712](https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/flu_season_gets_started_across_finland/11137712)

### **Flu warnings issued for parts of France as 'gastro' virus strikes south west**

France's public health authority has issued warnings over the spread of the flu virus, saying that four of the country's 13 regions are in 'pre-epidemic' phase. Santé publique France in its weekly bulletin recorded 1,787 flu-related hospital visits in the week before Christmas, of which 160 resulted in the patient being admitted - a sharp rise from previous weeks. "An increase in all the indicators, whether it be hospital and intensive care admissions or the number of consultations", has been observed in these regions, Vincent Henouf, deputy director of the influenza reference centre at the Pasteur Institute, told BFMTV.

<https://www.thelocal.fr/20191230/flu-warning-four-regions-of-france-in-pre-epidemic-phase>

### **Cork University Hospital maintain visiting restrictions amid flu outbreak**

Strict visiting restrictions remain in place at Cork University Hospital due to an outbreak of influenza, with no end date currently set for their easing. The restrictions, first applied on December 21, see visiting closed to all inpatient wards at the hospital, with the exception of children visits or those who are critically ill. Parents or guardians only are permitted to access the hospital's paediatric unit. Flu season in Ireland arrived four weeks early this year according to a HSE winter briefing last week, which has seen attendance at emergency departments and, as a matter of consequence, the number of patients on trolleys skyrocket.

<https://www.breakingnews.ie/ireland/cork-university-hospital-maintain-visiting-restrictions-amid-flu-outbreak-972668.html>

### **Flu activity in Washington state 'increasing and elevated,' Dept. of Health says**

The Washington State Department of Health is continuing to monitor the increasing flu activity in the state. According to an influenza update, 11 people have died from the flu during the 2019-2020 season with the most common type being Influenza B including two children and nine adults. From Dec. 15-21, about 7% "of visits among Influenza-like illness Network participants were for influenza-like illness, above the baseline of 1.5 percent," the health department said. Both influenza A and B were reported during this time frame.

<https://www.yaktrineews.com/flu-activity-in-washington-state-increasing-and-elevated-dept-of-health-says/>

### **Flu Is Widespread In Ohio Right Now**

The Ohio Department of Health's Melanie Amato says the flu season ramped up early this year. More than 400 Ohioans have been hospitalized so far. "We have moved into widespread, meaning there is flu in every corner of the state at this time," Amato says. Amato says the flu will likely spread easier during the holidays when people gather together to celebrate. She says the most prevalent strains this year are Influenza B and the H1N1 virus, and that both are in the current flu shot

<https://www.wvxu.org/post/flu-widespread-ohio-right-now>

### **Flu Surveillance in Animals**

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#### **Renewed hope for avian flu vaccine development**

The Pirbright Institute in the United Kingdom has made a breakthrough for the development of a vaccine that can protect poultry simultaneously from both avian influenza and Marek's disease. According to scientists there, this application of a genetic engineering technique will allow animal health companies to update vaccine strains

<https://www.wattagnet.com/articles/39380-renewed-hope-for-avian-flu-vaccine-development>