

Oklahoma Health Alert Network (OK-HAN)

OK-HAN Category: Health Advisory

Neurologic Complications of Influenza in Pediatric Patients: A Call for Cases

Recommendations for Clinicians

Call for Cases

CDC is investigating reports of pediatric influenza-associated encephalopathy and encephalitis (IAE), including acute necrotizing encephalopathy (ANE). In January 2025, the CDC was notified of several anecdotal reports of pediatric cases of influenza-associated ANE, including two deaths. There is currently no national surveillance for IAE or ANE, and it is not known whether reported cases are within or above expected ranges. An [MMWR](#) was published on February 27, 2025, that contains additional information regarding this situation, including some clinical recommendations.

Please contact the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) **Epidemiologist-on-Call at (405) 426-8710** if you or your facility have encountered or know of IAE or ANE cases that have occurred in Oklahoma that meet the following criteria:

1. Age <18 years AND
2. Admitted to an acute care hospital *or* pronounced dead in an emergency department between October 1, 2024, and May 30, 2025, AND
3. Laboratory-confirmed influenza virus infection within 14 days preceding hospital presentation, during hospitalization, or in respiratory specimens collected post-mortem AND
4. Documented neurologic abnormalities (meets one or more of the following):
 - a. Diagnosis of encephalopathy or encephalitis
 - b. Neurologic signs or symptoms including but not limited to seizures, altered mental status, delirium, decreased level of consciousness, lethargy, hallucinations, or personality changes lasting >24 hours
 - c. Neuroimaging abnormalities such as brain edema, brain inflammation, or brain lesions
 - d. Electroencephalogram abnormalities
 - e. Abnormal brain autopsy findings, if available, for children who died

Influenza Reporting Requirements in Oklahoma

Health care providers and laboratories are required to report the following to OSDH:

- Influenza-associated hospitalizations and deaths (within one business day)
- Unusual disease or syndrome, such as a severe presentation of influenza, including cases of suspected influenza-associated encephalopathy or encephalitis (within one business day)

Health care providers should report influenza-associated hospitalizations and deaths in PHIDDO. In addition, any unusual or severe presentations of influenza, including suspected influenza-associated encephalopathy or encephalitis, should be reported in PHIDDO and followed up with a call to the **OSDH Epidemiologist on Call at (405) 426-8710** to ensure timely coordination and investigation.

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Recommendations for Laboratories

Specimen Submission

In addition to the recommendations within OK-HAN_419 - Accelerated Subtyping of Influenza A in Hospitalized Patients, the OSDH recommends submitting specimens from patients with suspected IAE and ANE to the OSDH Public Health Laboratory (PHL) for subtyping and further analysis. Questions about specimen submission can be directed to the OSDH PHL at (405) 564-7750.

Resources

- MMWR: [Reports of Encephalopathy Among Children with Influenza-Associated Mortality — United States, 2010–11 Through 2024–25 Influenza Seasons](#)



This message has been distributed to Primary Care and Infectious Disease Physicians, Family Medicine Physicians, Obstetrics, Pediatricians, Pulmonologists, Infection Preventionists, Laboratorians, Urgent Care Centers, Emergency Departments, and State and Local Health Officials

The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) Acute Disease Service (ADS) is now using 4 types of documents to provide important information to medical and public health professionals, and to other interested persons:

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert

Provides vital, time-sensitive information for a specific incident or situation; warrants immediate action or attention by health officials, laboratorians, clinicians, and members of the public and conveys the highest level of importance.

Health Advisory

Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; contains recommendations or actionable items to be performed by public health officials, laboratorians, and/or clinicians; may not require immediate action.

Health Update

Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate attention.

Health Info/Event

Provides general public health information; unlikely to require immediate action.

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