

VIRGINIA INFLUENZA SENTINEL SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM



About the Council

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is recruiting outpatient providers to participate in the Sentinel Surveillance Program, which helps VDH monitor influenza trends over time. During the influenza season, this program will also help VDH monitor how influenza is affecting the community.

We need your help to make this happen!

What is Sentinel Surveillance?

This is a program where selected healthcare providers (i.e. sentinel sites) collect specimens from people who present with an influenza-like illness (ILI). ILI symptoms include Fever $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ and cough and/or sore throat. These specimens are tested at the state public health laboratory, the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services (DCLS), to monitor the viruses circulating and to look for any potential issues of public health concern. Specimen collection is conducted during active flu season, MMWR Week 40 to MMWR Week 20 of the following year. This is usually from early October to mid-May.

What is Sentinel Surveillance looking for?

This program's focus is to look for any novel viruses that could lead to large outbreaks or pandemics. This program also participates in the detection of antiviral resistance for the commonly circulating strains, in collaboration with CDC's National Influenza Reference laboratories.

Are there other benefits to Sentinel Surveillance?

This program also uses data collected to assess when and where influenza is occurring. This data is one of the primary ways public health collects viral genomic information to make decisions about vaccine components.

Information collected from sentinel providers is used in combination with clinical and laboratory data and severe influenza case data throughout the state to monitor the timing, location, and impact of influenza viruses year-round.

Why is Sentinel Surveillance important?

It is important to maintain a system for influenza surveillance because influenza viruses are constantly changing, thus ongoing data analysis and characterization of the virus are essential. Surveillance programs can identify major changes in the virus, referred to as antigenic shift, that can result in a virus that is different from the circulating viruses. This data can help public health professionals make informed decisions and eventually instigate public health responses.

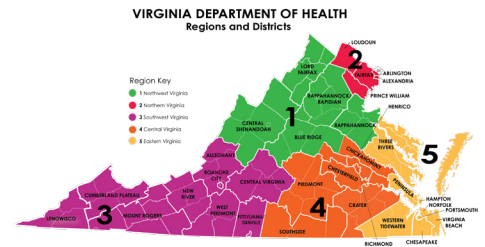


What would participation mean for my practice?

The Sentinel Surveillance team has a goal of receiving at least 175 specimens from across Virginia for patients who meet ILI criteria each week for testing at DCLS, during active influenza season only. For each provider, this would mean between ten to fifteen (10-15) specimens per week. VDH and DCLS will provide all the necessary specimen collection supplies and shipping materials, as well as a weekly summary of all the test results for your region. The cost of this program is covered by VDH and DCLS – there is no cost to your practice or your patients.

What is VDH looking for?

VDH is looking for two to three (2-3) provider offices per region to participate. Our priorities are outpatient primary care and urgent care practices, with great interest in providers who see underserved communities.



How do I sign up?

You can fill out this survey to provide your facility's contact information. Once we receive your information, our team will contact you to discuss participation. For any additional questions, please feel free to email VDH's Central Office at flu@vdh.virginia.gov.

VDH needs your help to monitor how influenza is affecting our community. Participate in the Sentinel Surveillance Program to help monitor influenza trends over time and to identify what vaccine components should be included in the seasonal influenza vaccine!

Contact Information

Email: flu@vdh.virginia.gov

Website: [Sentinel Surveillance](#)