

Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet)

The West Virginia Sentinel Provider Program 2024-2025

FAQ for Potential Participants



Q: What is an ILI sentinel provider?

Unlike that of many other diseases, influenza surveillance is not focused on determining and quantifying cases with clear cut definitions. Instead, a variety of different surveillance indicators are collected by state and national influenza surveillance programs to determine the timing and relative severity of each influenza season. **ILINet sentinel providers are healthcare providers who report how many visits they have weekly for influenza-like illness (ILI) into the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) system called ILINet.** Nationwide, more than 2,000 providers participate as ILINet sentinel providers every year. In recent years, 50-60 sentinel providers have participated in West Virginia annually.

Q: Who is eligible to be an ILINet sentinel provider?

ILINet sentinel providers can be healthcare providers of any specialty, but it is preferred they are **primary care providers or other providers who would likely see patients for respiratory illnesses throughout the year.**

Sentinel providers may be associated with a hospital or health system. For the past couple of seasons, the CDC Influenza Division has made opportunities available for hospital emergency departments (EDs) to serve as ILINet sentinel providers. Under this new mechanism, EDs reporting their syndromic surveillance data to ESSENCE will have their data pulled by CDC staff and migrated into ILINet. For more information regarding hospital system participation as a sentinel provider, please refer to the “FAQ for Potential Providers – Hospitals”.

Laboratories of any kind are not eligible. As required by the West Virginia Reportable Disease Rule, they must report certain influenza laboratory results weekly to the West Virginia Influenza Surveillance Coordinator. If your facility has a laboratory with questions about this process, please contact Makayla.A.Haynes@wv.gov.

All sentinel providers must have access to the internet and ability to log into ILINet to make weekly reports – **FAXED REPORTS ARE NO LONGER ACCEPTED.**

Q: What are the responsibilities of an ILINet sentinel provider?

- Access ILINet by **12:00 P.M. every Tuesday** to report counts of patient visits occurring the previous reporting week. The primary reporting period occurs during 33 weeks between October and late May although providers are asked to continue to report every week during the enrollment year.
- **Collect respiratory specimens from patients with ILI and submit up to five per week to the state public health laboratory** (West Virginia Office of Laboratory Services (OLS)) for influenza testing and characterization.
- Communicate with the local health department and/or the influenza surveillance program about important matters (e.g., technical issues, changes in the point of contact, local ILI outbreaks of which the sentinel provider is aware).

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Q: What incentives are there for being a sentinel provider?

- Free doses of adult influenza vaccine distributed by the West Virginia Division of Immunization Services, with sentinel provider's staff size used to determine how many doses will be provided (maximum of 50 doses). Adult influenza vaccine offered to providers as part of the ILINet participation are paid for through funds that prohibit healthcare providers for charging a fee for administration. More information about who can be vaccinated with these doses, as well as proper billing and reporting of their administrations, will be communicated to sentinel providers who request doses can be requested from the Division of Immunization Services.
- Free specimen collection kits and shipping materials to submit respiratory specimens to OLS, as supply and funding are available.

Q: How does a healthcare provider officially become a sentinel provider?

Healthcare providers need to enroll as sentinel providers every year regardless of whether they participated last year or in previous years. Please enroll by completing the [ILINet Sentinel Provider Enrollment Form](#). Providers are encouraged to complete the electronic enrollment form, however, if your facility server blocks the e-form a paper enrollment form is available. Once a provider has completed the enrollment form, the influenza surveillance program will distribute communications and other materials to them.

Q: Are there opportunities to learn more about this program or influenza surveillance in general?

The West Virginia Influenza Surveillance Program holds an annual webinar every year. Details about the upcoming webinar will be released at a later date.

Registration for upcoming webinar will be found at: <https://wvruralhealth.org/events/>.

Thank you for considering participation in this program. If you have further questions, please contact the Surveillance Epidemiologist at Makayla.A.Haynes@wv.gov.