



Second wave of flu hits Massachusetts

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REUTERS/BRIAN SNYDER/FILE 2013

A nurse prepared an injection of the influenza vaccine at Massachusetts General Hospital.

By [Matt Rocheleau](#)

GLOBE STAFF APRIL 07, 2017

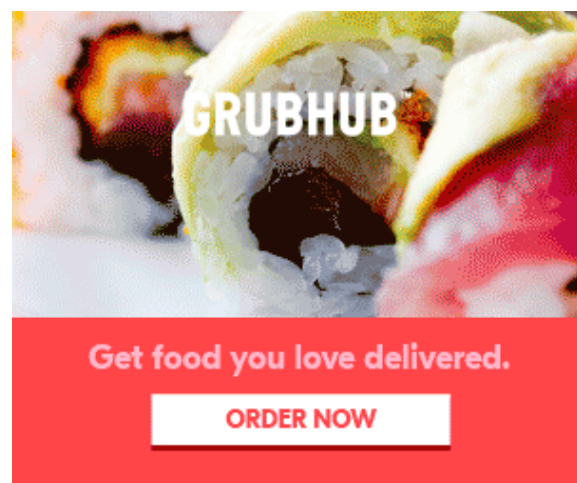
A second wave of the flu is going around Massachusetts.

It's been a pretty active flu season so far — including being blamed for a [number of Red Sox](#) players

falling ill of late.

Early on, the flu season was dominated by one type of the virus, influenza A.

But while type A has been on a steady decline in recent weeks, another version of the flu, type B, has been surging, according to [data](#) released Friday by the state Department of Public Health.



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That's led to a spike in flu-activity overall across the state, though the number of cases in the past few weeks has still remained below peaks seen in mid- and late-February.



Hanley Ramirez sidelined by flu

Brock Holt, who has recovered from the flu, filled in at designated hitter Friday in Detroit.

Illnesses at Connecticut hotel, convention center under investigation

“There’s been a little bit of an uptick in the flu in the past few weeks, and most of it has been influenza B,” said Dr. Larry Madoff, director of the state health department’s Division of Epidemiology and Immunization.

Type A cases peaked this season in the week that ended on Feb. 11, when there were 817 laboratory-confirmed cases statewide. The number of type A cases has dropped virtually every week since, falling to 231 in the week that ended on April 1, state data show.

Meanwhile, during that same span, the number of laboratory-confirmed type B cases statewide has risen virtually every week, from 51 to 349.

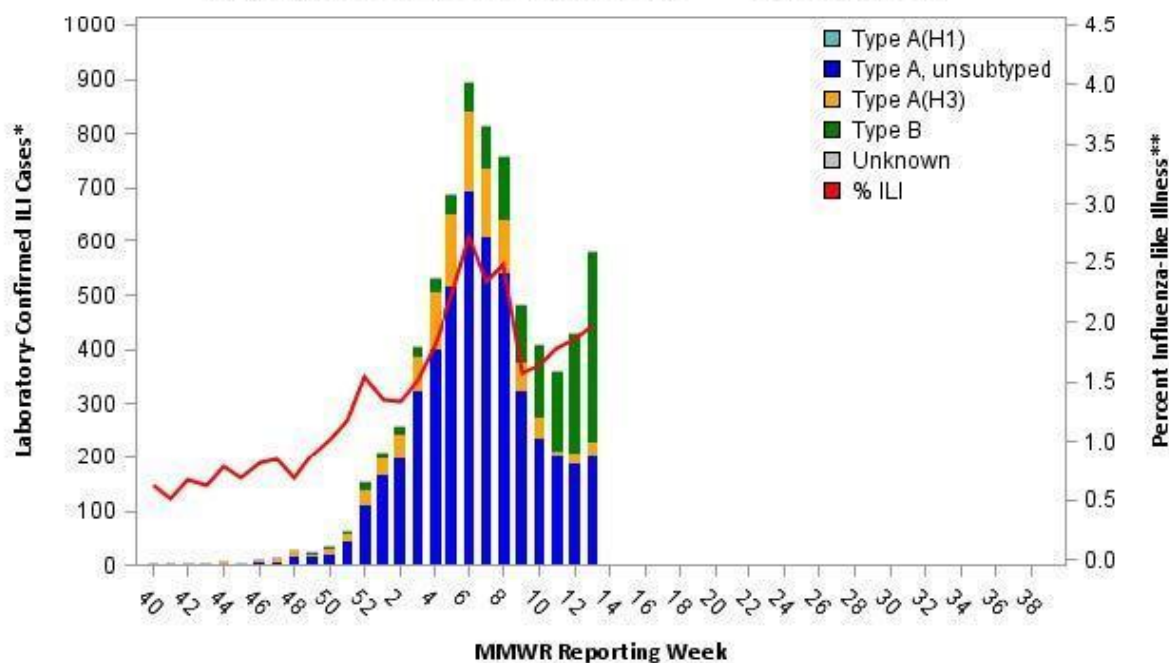
(Laboratory-confirmed figures likely underestimate how many people actually contract the flu, but are a good indicator of overall trends.)

The trend has been similar within Boston, according to data from the city’s health commission. And at the [national level](#), there’s also been a spike in type B cases of the flu.

Madoff said it’s not unusual for type B to peak around this time of year, and overall, this flu season has been fairly typical in terms of timing and intensity.



**Figure 3: Laboratory-confirmed Influenza Cases and Influenza-like Illness
Massachusetts, October 2, 2016 – April 1, 2017**



*influenza cases confirmed via viral culture or PCR test by specimen collection date.

**influenza-like illness (ILI, defined as fever >100F and cough and/or sore throat), as reported by Massachusetts sentinel surveillance sites by CDC week date.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Within the broader type A and B flu categories, there are even more specific varieties of the flu, which are what actually circulate and vary from year to year.

Flu vaccines are made to protect people against those more specific flu versions of both influenza A and B.

Each year, months before the start of the flu season in the United States, health authorities examine which specific versions of the flu are circulating elsewhere in the world and make their best judgment about which are likely to strike and include them in that year’s vaccine. It can take several months to produce large quantities of influenza vaccine.

Vaccination can reduce the risk of contracting the flu by as much as 50 to 60 percent, recent studies [have shown](#), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Madoff said this year’s vaccines have been effective, and recommended people who haven’t been vaccinated already to do so. The season should be winding down, but elevated flu activity could linger into May, he said.

“If you haven’t gotten one yet, you should still get one,” said Madoff.

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs, [the CDC says](#). Symptoms can include fever or feeling chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, and fatigue.

It can cause mild to severe illness, and can lead to death, [officials say](#).

Each year, the flu sickens millions of people in the United States, sending hundreds of thousands of them to hospitals, and thousands, if not tens of thousands, die, [the CDC says](#).

People most at risk for serious complications include young children, pregnant women, people 65 years and older, and people with chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease.

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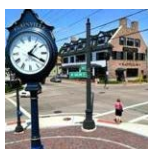
Storms could bring hail and severe winds

Damaging winds, quarter-size hail, and even a tornado are possibilities in Massachusetts today. [MORE...](#)

Dick Albert, former Channel 5 weatherman, dies

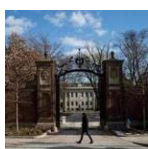


“It’s a huge loss,” said Harvey Leonard. “It’s truly like losing a brother, that’s what I considered him to be.” [MORE...](#)



In Michelle Carter’s hometown, opinions vary on justice of her sentence

Residents who spoke to the Globe were split on whether Carter, now 20, received an appropriate sentence for urging Conrad Roy III to kill himself. [MORE...](#)



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Harvard’s push to broaden diversity comes as the Trump administration turns its focus on affirmative action policies. [MORE...](#)



VA Secretary ousts third official at troubled N.H. hospital

VA Secretary David Shulkin said he was responding to allegations of dangerously substandard care made by medical staff in a Boston Globe report last month. [MORE...](#)



Mother of Conrad Roy III seeks \$4.2m in wrongful death suit against Michelle Carter

Lynn Roy says she is seeking damages “caused by the defendant’s negligence and wanton and reckless conduct.” [MORE...](#)



State agrees with Trump administration to delay long-awaited water pollution rules

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Teamster in Top Chef trial could get jail time for posting on Facebook during trial

Daniel Redmond, one of four Teamsters on trial, posted an article on the Facebook page, “Support the Teamster 4,” violating a court order to not speak publicly about the case. [MORE...](#)



Thousands of cyclists are pedaling during the 38th Pan-Mass Challenge

More than 5,300 cyclists took off Saturday morning in the 2017 Pan-Mass Challenge, raising money for patient care and cancer research. [MORE...](#)



He thought he was dying, but highway chief paved his own road to salvation

Tom Tinlin needed a lot of things to go his way when a blood vessel in his brain burst in April. Fittingly, one of them was traffic. [MORE...](#)



Lawbreakers or just really lucky? Mass. has more repeat lottery winners than any other state

Some people redeem so many winning tickets that they raise questions about the integrity and oversight of the \$5 billion state lottery. [MORE...](#)

Police disperse hundreds of youths in the North End

State Police spokesman David Procopio said Boston police requested Massachusetts State Police assistance with dispersing between 500 and 1,000 youths. [MORE...](#)



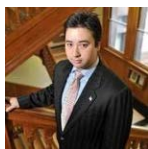
A cross-country bicycle trip of a lifetime — delayed 40 years

John Sweeney averaged 65 miles a day, mostly along Route 20, a 3,365-mile ribbon of asphalt that is the longest road in the United States. [MORE...](#)



State Police investigate video of youths fighting on pier in Quincy

A video of youths being punched and kicked is making the rounds on social media. [MORE...](#)



Cambridge city councilor to leave politics

Cambridge city councilor Leland Cheung, the first Asian-American on the council, announced this week that he intends to leave politics. [MORE...](#)

This weekend, bus shuttles replace rail service on five lines



You might want to just stay home this weekend. [MORE...](#)



Michelle Carter receives 15 months in jail; will remain free pending appeal

A judge sentenced Michelle Carter to two and a half years, with 15 months to serve and 15 months probation, for goading her boyfriend to kill himself in a high-profile texting suicide case. However, he allowed Carter to remain free while awaiting appeal. [MORE...](#)



'Dukes of Hazzard' actor arrested in Waltham

Tom Wopat was arraigned on a charge of groping a woman who was to share the stage with him in a local production of "42nd Street." [MORE...](#)

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