

# Region 7 Epidemiology & Surveillance Newsletter Influenza Season 2009-2010 Edition #1

11 September 2009



## *Influenza Surveillance Highlights*

- The number of weekly reporters in our influenza surveillance increased with schools starting back
- Overall influenza activity is increasing in the Region.

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## **Back to School**

Region 7 has been tracking influenza in our 30 counties all summer long. In April, our surveillance efforts focused on individual reports of confirmed cases of novel H1N1 (now referred to as 2009 H1N1). As it became clear that most people were not displaying signs of severe, life threatening illness, we transitioned our surveillance back to the traditional influenza surveillance system we use every year during flu season. Throughout the summer, we continued to receive reports of influenza and influenza like illness (fever with a cough and/or with a sore throat). Many summer camps were impacted by influenza. Region 7 worked closely with these camps to control the spread of influenza within and without the camp. The influenza activity in the summer camps gave us a preview of what to anticipate when school started back in August.

As expected, many schools in the Region are reporting influenza like illness among students. Schools are encouraged to follow their seasonal influenza policies.

Tips for controlling the spread of influenza:

- Exclude ill students/staff from school until they have been fever free (without the use of fever reducing medications) for at least 24 hours.
- If a student (or staff) becomes ill while at school, separate them from well students and send them home.
- Encourage frequent hand washing.
- Make sure tissues are readily available.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has an excellent toolkit for schools. The toolkit contains guidance for schools as well as fact sheets and sample letters for parents. The toolkit can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/toolkit/>

Schools are encouraged to call Region 7 Epidemiology at 254-778-6744 if they have questions or are concerned about the number of students out with influenza like illness.

## **New or Updated Guidance**

Don't forget to sign up for update alerts on [www.texasflu.org](http://www.texasflu.org)

- Laboratory Testing Protocol for the Surveillance of Novel H1N1 Influenza and Seasonal Influenza— revised on 09/08/09 [www.texasflu.org](http://www.texasflu.org)
- Updated Interim Recommendations for the Use of Antiviral Medications in the Treatment and Prevention of Influenza for the 2009-2010 Season— updated 09/08/09 [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/)
- Guidance on Helping Child Care & Early Childhood Programs Respond to Flu during the 2009-2010 Flu Season—09/04/09 [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/)

## Region 7 Influenza Activity Week of August 30 to September 05

Counties	Bastrop	Bell	Blanco	Bosque	Brazos	Burleson	Burnet	Caldwell
Flu A	1	27	3	2	95	1	4	4
Flu B	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not Diff.	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
ILI	34	115	0	19	76	0	63	59

Counties	Coryell	Falls	Fayette	Freestone	Grimes	Hamilton	Hays	Hill
Flu A	7	14	11	4	3	0	54	6
Flu B	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Not Diff.	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
ILI	38	47	25	9	11	4	140	90

Counties	Lampasas	Lee	Leon	Limestone	Llano	McLennan	Madison	Milam
Flu A	0	2	0	2	0	144	20	4
Flu B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Not Diff.	0	0	0	0	0	15	0	0
ILI	8	9	1	29	2	55	19	25

Counties	Mills	Robertson	San Saba	Travis	Washington	Williamson	Totals
Flu A	<i>No Rpt</i>	0	0	191	2	95	696
Flu B	<i>No Rpt</i>	0	0	0	0	0	3
Not Diff.	<i>No Rpt</i>	0	0	0	0	10	34
ILI	<i>No Rpt</i>	7	4	783	27	273	1972

**Flu A:** May include both seasonal strains and the novel H1N1 strain. **Flu B:** Influenza B. **Not Diff:** Indicates a positive influenza test that does not differentiate between Influenza A or B. **ILI:** Influenza like illness is defined as a fever over 100 plus a cough and/or a sore throat.

Influenza is not a reportable event, however we request reports from counties in our region to help gauge the current level of activity as well as to provide a report to Central Office. So this information is based on information provided and therefore may not represent a complete picture of what is occurring in that county.

Go to [www.texasflu.org](http://www.texasflu.org) for up-to-date guidance

# Region 7 Flu Activity Summary

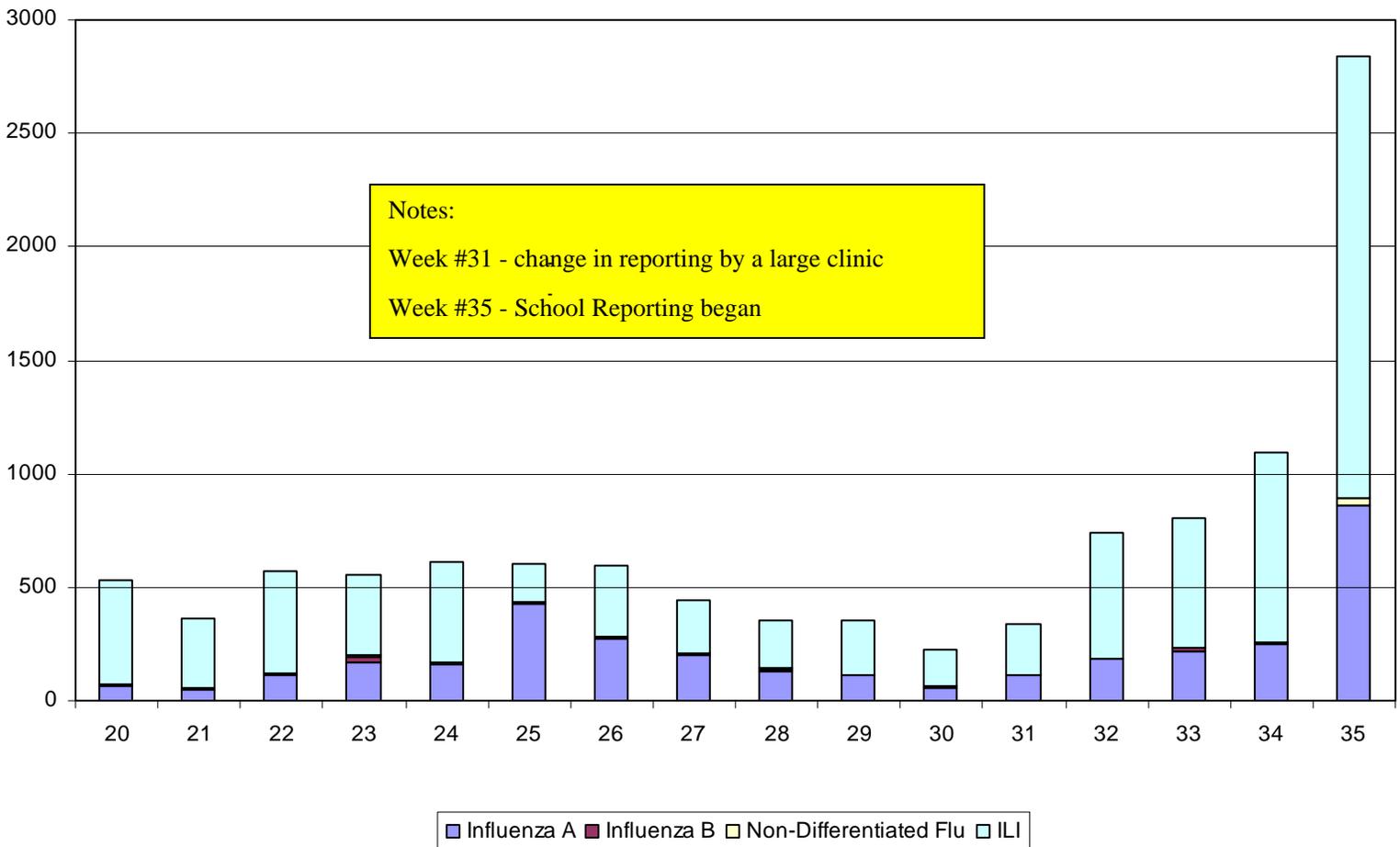
Influenza activity in Region 7 is higher than expected for this time of year. Influenza activity has been showing an increase since week 32 (August 09 to August 15) which corresponds roughly with the increase in extracurricular activities at schools e.g. sports team practice. The apparent increase in ILI during week 35 (August 30 to September 05) was due primarily to the start of school reporting throughout the region. At this time, the novel H1N1 strain is the predominate influenza strain circulating. The state wide weekly influenza report is accessible from [www.texasflu.org](http://www.texasflu.org).

## Key Facts about Seasonal Influenza Reporting

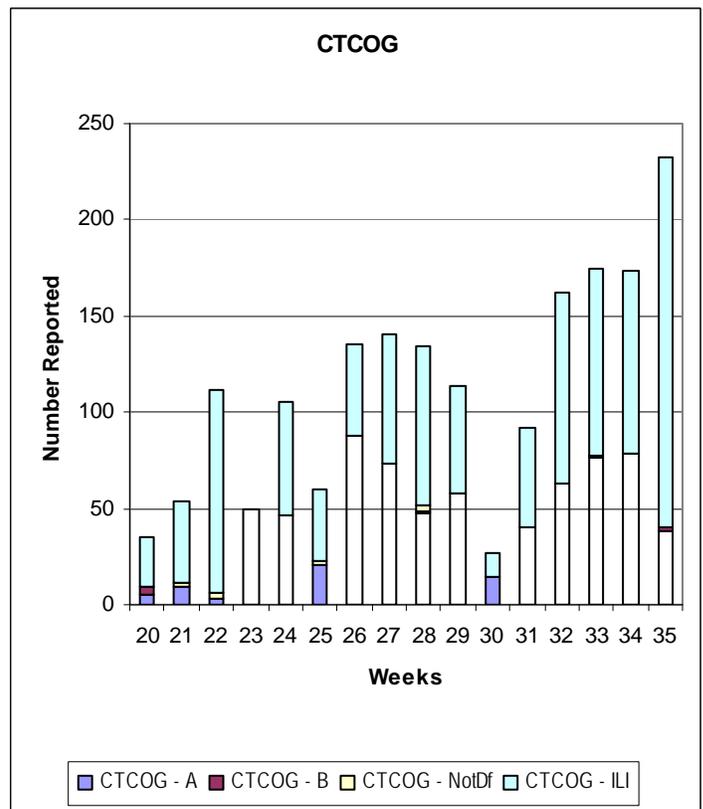
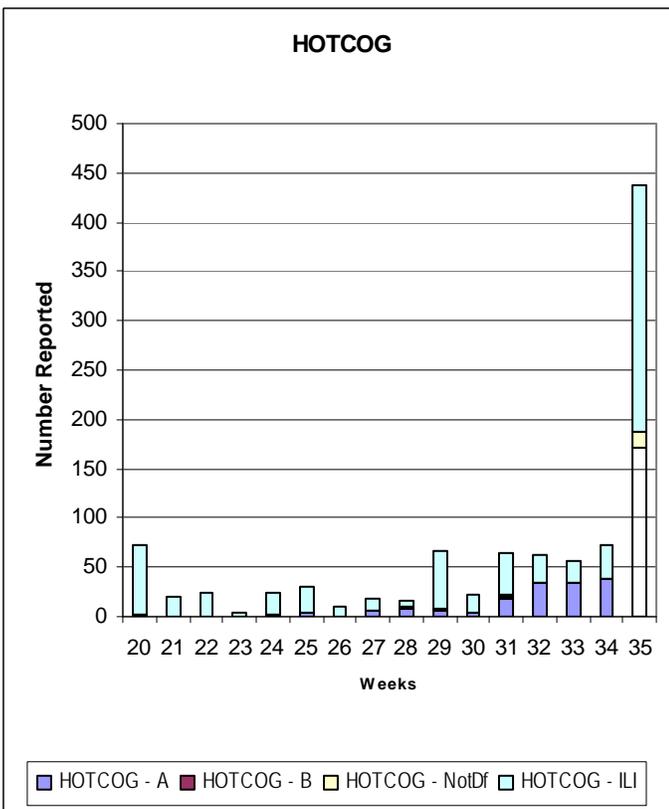
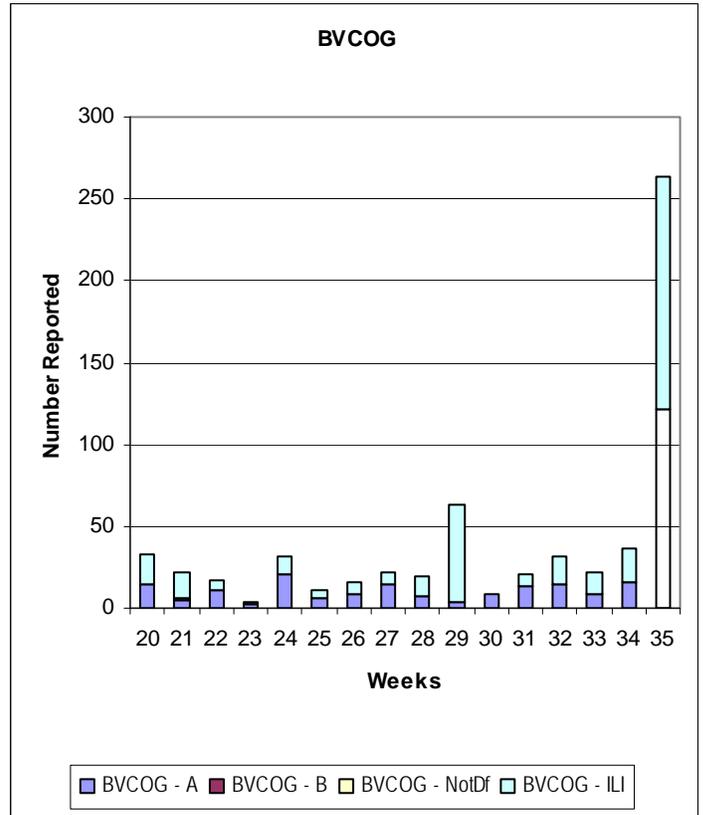
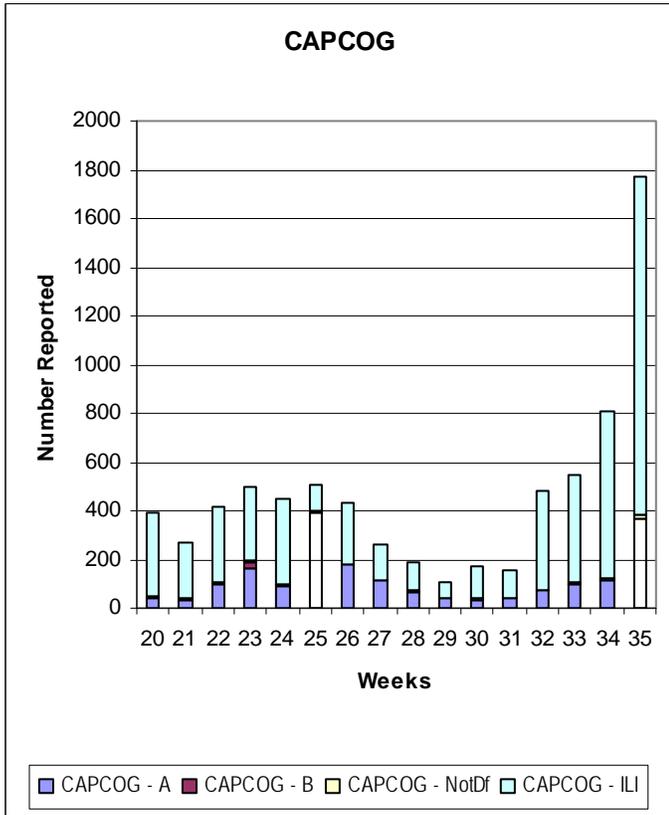
- Influenza reports are received on a weekly basis from hospitals, clinics and schools.
- Influenza reporting is voluntary.
- Influenza reports include seasonal influenza A & B, novel H1N1 influenza and influenza like illness (ILI)
- Influenza report weeks begin on Sunday and end on Saturday.
- Influenza activity graphs are updated weekly and may change slightly as reports are received

## Region 7 Influenza Activity by Week

Surveillance of Influenza Activity  
Texas Department of State Health Service Region 7



# Region 7 Flu Activity by COG



## When to Report Individual Cases of HINI to Region 7

Region 7 is currently receiving aggregate numbers of people seen with influenza like illness (ILI) and/or influenza from hospitals, clinics and schools on a weekly basis. These aggregate counts are collected as part of our routine influenza surveillance system. In addition to these aggregate counts, there are a few circumstances where Region 7 would like reports on individuals with ILI and/or influenza in counties where we serve as the local health department.

- Patients with ILI who are admitted to the ICU
- Patients with ILI who die (please report by phone immediately)
- Patients with ILI that may have antiviral resistant influenza
- Patients with confirmed influenza who have an unusual presentation not expected with influenza

Furthermore, Region 7 would like to be notified immediately if an outbreak is suspected at an institution or facility (i.e. school, nursing home, daycare, jail, large business, ect).

Influenza reports should be made by phone to 254-778-6744 or by fax to 254-899-0405 attn Epidemiology.

◆.....◆ **ILI = Fever over 100 WITH a cough and/or a sore throat** .....◆

## When to Submit Flu Isolates to DSHS

Most flu specimens can now be submitted to commercial laboratories for influenza identification. A list of laboratories with this capability is maintained at [www.texasflu.org](http://www.texasflu.org). The DSHS lab will no longer accept flu specimens for diagnostic purposes. The DSHS is interested in receiving flu specimens that are of public health surveillance significance.

We would like for healthcare providers to submit specimens for the following category of patient:

- Pregnant with ILI
- ILI patients who died with no other known cause of death (must be collected ante mortem)
- Antiviral resistance suspected
- Hospitalized with ILI for at least 48 hours plus one or more of the following:
  - Severe illness such as lower respiratory tract infections or pneumonia
  - Unusual presentation in children, adults >64 or immuno-compromised individuals

In addition to the categories above, DSHS Region 7 may authorize testing for any specimen that is associated with a public health investigation or from a provider supporting our influenza surveillance efforts.

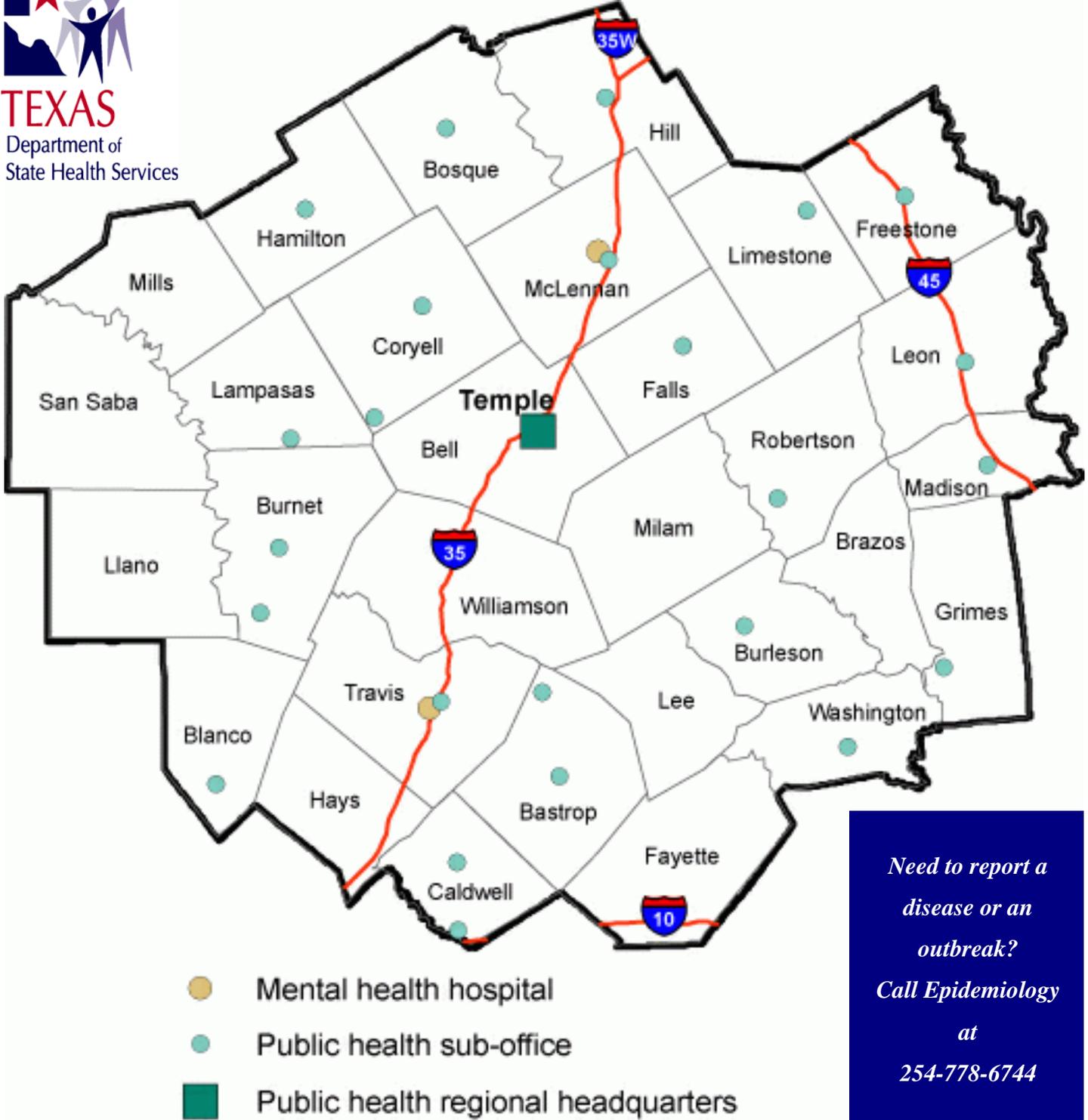
Any specimen submitted that does not meet the above qualifications will be rejected by the DSHS lab. The qualification for testing must be indicated clearly on the submission form. Please contact Region 7 Epidemiology at 254-778-6744 if you have questions about what specimens DSHS is looking for.

Call Region 7  
Epidemiology  
at  
254-778-6744

Go to [www.texasflu.org](http://www.texasflu.org) for up-to-date guidance



# DSHS Region 7



*Need to report a  
disease or an  
outbreak?  
Call Epidemiology  
at  
254-778-6744*

**Regional Medical Director: Tom Betz, MD, MPH**

Main Office  
2408 South 37th Street  
Temple, TX 76504  
Phone: 254-778-6744

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/region7/default.shtm>

**Epidemiology Program**

Influenza Reporting  
Phone: 254-778-6744  
Fax: 254-899-0405  
Email: HSR7.Epi@dshs.state.tx.us

Go to [www.texasflu.org](http://www.texasflu.org) for up-to-date guidance