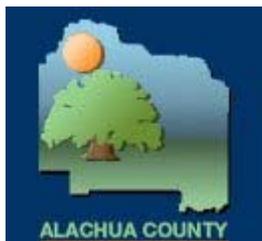


# THE EPI INVESTIGATOR



Alachua County Health Department



Improving Public Health in Our Community Through Cooperation

## Quarterly Epi Newsletter

Summer 2004

Alachua County Health Department  
(352) 334-7900

To report a disease phone or fax the appropriate office below:

### Director

Tom Belcuore, MS  
Tom\_Belcuore@doh.state.fl.us  
(352) 334-7902

### Environmental Health

Director Paul Myers, MS  
(352) 334-7931

### Epidemiology

Lynne Vickery, RN  
Jerne Shapiro, MPH  
(352) 334-7930  
Fax: (352) 334-7935

### HIV/AIDS Surveillance

Rick Trachsel  
(352) 334-7968  
Patti Carnuccio  
(352) 334-7967

### Lead Poisoning

Jerne Shapiro, MPH  
(352) 334-8827

### Sexually Transmitted Disease

George Gibbs  
(352) 334-7900 ext 3471 or 3470  
Fax: (352) 334-8818

### Tuberculosis

Gail Beard, RN  
(352) 334-7988  
Fax: (352) 955-6464

Remember suspected food borne illnesses can be reported to the Alachua County Health Dept. at (352) 334-7930.

## Eastern Equine Encephalitis

Positive samples from 9 horses in 7 counties, no dead birds, 26 sentinel chickens in eight counties and 11 live wild birds in three counties.

## West Nile Virus

Positive samples from 92 sentinel chickens in 15 counties, one horse, two dead birds and four live wild birds from three counties.

## Local and State Influenza Information 2003-2004

By: Jerne Shapiro, MPH  
County Epidemiologist

Annually it is estimated that 6,000-10,000 Floridians are hospitalized due to Influenza related illnesses. Florida alone experiences over 3,000 pneumonia/flu deaths per year.

The Alachua County Epidemiology Department seasonally collects and analyzes local influenza surveillance data. The local influenza surveillance program is comprised of: Influenza Like Illness (ILI) cases seen by volunteer sentinel physicians, the positive influenza lab reports from all four Alachua County hospitals, and school and work absentee rates.

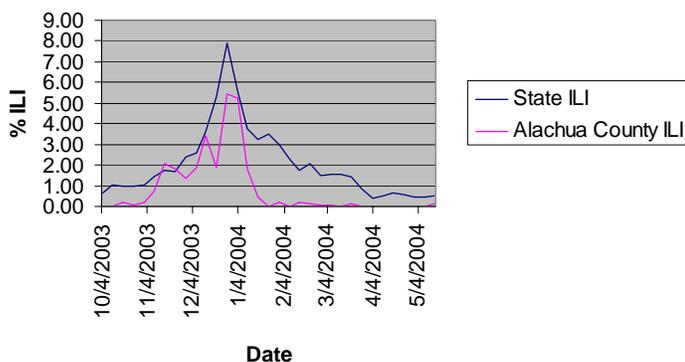
Alachua County's data is distributed to the state level where the county's ILI rates are analyzed. It is through the physician sentinel surveillance program that state and local ILI activity levels are examined and influenza strain monitoring occurs. The baseline for the North East Region of Florida, including Alachua County, is 2.41% ILI. Influenza activity below this level is considered mild. The threshold level for the North East region is 4.13% ILI, actively above this is considered high. ILI activity between the baseline and the threshold is considered moderate (2.41%-4.13%).

The week ending December 27, 2003 Alachua County reached 5.45% ILI, surpassing the threshold level by 1.32%. The increase in influenza like illness's seen locally can be correlated with the rise in ILI cases seen statewide. Florida's level peaked the same week at 7.92% ILI, 3.79% over the states 4.13% ILI threshold level.

The influenza data helps determine when and where we need to focus our prevention efforts. Each season local physicians are asked to participate as sentinel providers. To become a sentinel provider all that is required is to report each week the total number of patients seen with influenza like illnesses (ILI) as well as the number total number of patients seen. I am actively trying to increase our number of sentinel physicians if you are interested in becoming a sentinel physician for next year please call me, Jerne Shapiro, at (352) 334-8827.

**A special thanks to last year's sentinel providers, all local hospital, laboratories, Alachua County School Board, and Shands Occupational Health. Without your reporting we would not be able to monitor Influenza in our Community.**

State vs Alachua County's ILI % 2003-2004



# Epidemiologic Analysis for Asthma, Alachua County, Florida

By: Emily Wilson, R.S., MPH,  
Environmental Epidemiologist  
Jennifer Emelianchik–  
AHEC Intern

Asthma is not a reportable disease in Florida. Therefore, rates of asthma morbidity and mortality in Florida are found separately in four different databases: the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Vital Statistics (death certificates), hospitalization records and School Health data. In this analysis, the four data sets were examined and asthma rates for Alachua County were compared with asthma rates for Florida.

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System is a telephone survey which looked at the frequency of personal health behaviors which contribute to morbidity. Over 34,000 adults in Florida were asked, “Have you ever been told by a doctor that you had asthma?” Alachua county residents reported an asthma rate of 12.8% which was above the state of Florida’s rate of 10.7%. More information on the BRFSS, including charts, can be found online at <http://www.floridacharts.com/charts/brfss.aspx>.

The second data set evaluated was the vital statistics from 2002. Death certificates were examined for immediate and underlying causes of deaths due to asthma. In Florida there were 232 asthma deaths, including 3 deaths in Alachua County. The age adjusted death rate from asthma for Florida was 1.2 per 100,000 compared to the Alachua County’s higher rate of 1.7 per 100,000.

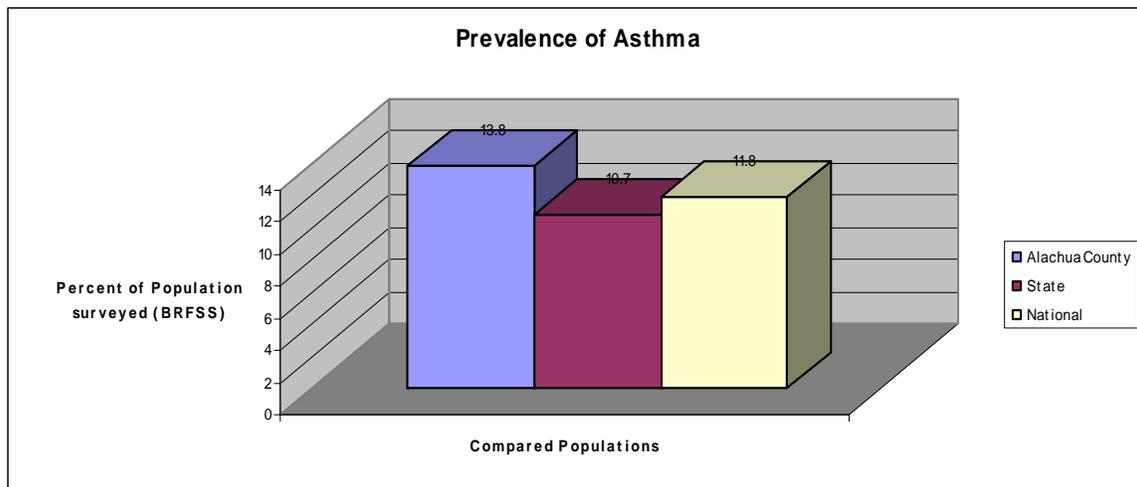
Next, hospitalization billing records ICD 9 codes: 493.00-493.91 were used to classify asthma cases; the information did not include data from Veteran Administration or military hospitals. This data reported the average age of a person with asthma to be 34 years old, the average hospital stay was 3.2 days and the average hospital charge for asthma patients was \$8,190. These

records were the only data set which resulted in lower prevalence rates for asthma in Alachua County, where 551.6 asthma hospitalizations per 100,000 people compared to Florida which had a rate of 616.6 per 100,000 people.

Finally, school health data was collected from local public schools by means of parent completed health cards. In 2002, Alachua County schools reported 67.7 per 1,000 children to have asthma compared to the Florida average of 39.9 per 1,000. Since, 1995 the prevalence of asthma among school children has been higher for Alachua County when compared to state data. Much of this could be due to the excellent reporting and follow through from the school health nurses in Alachua County.

Overall, the prevalence of asthma appears to be higher for Alachua County when compared to the state average; however, each source of data has strengths and limitations. One major limitation is that asthma is an intermittent chronic illness, often will episodes occurring after hours. Diagnosing asthma is challenging. Although the clinical definition of asthma is the presence of variable airflow obstruction that reverses either spontaneously or with treatment, differentiating asthma from other chronic obstructive lung diseases remains difficult, chiefly among preschool and older adult populations. The Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists has developed a case definition for asthma (<http://www.cste.org/ps/1998/1998-eh-cd-01.htm>) for use in epidemiologic studies of asthma and asthma surveillance that provides definition uniformity.

Surveillance for Asthma — United States, 1980-1999.  
MMWR March 29, 2002



# Alachua County's Reportable Diseases

Disease	2004 (Jan- June)	2003 (Jan- June)	2003 Cum	Disease	2004 (Jan- June)	2003 (Jan- June)	2003 Cum
AIDS	30	16	46	Hepatitis B (includes perinatal)	58	1*	41*
Animal Bites to Humans	5	6	28	Hepatitis C	193	13*	152*
Anthrax	0	0	0	Hepatitis non-A, Non B	0	0	0
Botulism	0	0	0	Hepatitis, Other (including unspecified)	0	0	0
Brucellosis	1	0	0	Hepatitis B surface antigen + in pregnant women or child < 24 months	14	8	4
Campylobacteriosis	9	6	17	Herpes Simplex Virus in < 6mo of age	0	**	**
Chancroid	0	0	0	HIV	21	17	32
<i>Chlamydia trachomatis</i>	438	502	1185	Human Papillomavirus (HPV) <12 years	0	**	**
Ciguatera	0	0	0	Lead Poisoning	1	0	2
Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD)	0	**	**	Legionellosis	1	0	1
Cryptosporidiosis	0	0	2	Leptospirosis	0	0	0
Cyclosporiasis	0	0	0	Listeriosis	0	0	0
Dengue	0	0	1	Lyme Disease	0	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0	0	Lymphogranuloma Venereum	0	0	0
Ehrlichiosis, human	1	0	2	Malaria	0	0	2
Encephalitis				Measles	0	0	0
Eastern Equine	0	0	0	Melioidosis	0	**	**
Non-arboviral	0	0	0	Meningitis (Bacterial & Mycotic)	0	4	7
Other arboviral	0	0	0	Meningococcal ( <i>Neisseria Meningitidis</i> )	1	1	2
St. Louis	0	0	0	Mercury Poisoning	0	0	0
Venezuelan Equine	0	0	0	Mumps	0	0	0
West Nile	0	0	1	Neurotoxic Shellfish Poisoning	0	0	0
Western Equine	0	0	0	Pertussis	0	0	0
<i>E.coli</i> 0157:H7	0	0	2	Pesticide-Related Illness or Injury	0	0	0
<i>E.coli</i> , Other (known sero)	0	0	2	Plague	0	0	0
Epsilon toxin of <i>Clostridium perfringes</i>	0	**	**	Poliomyelitis	0	0	0
Giardiasis (acute)	7	3	12	Psittacosis	0	0	0
Glanders	0	**	**	Q fever	1	0	0
Gonorrhea	198	189	547	Rabies Human	0	0	0
Granuloma Inguinale	0	0	0	Rabies Animal	8	3	14
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> , inv disease	0	0	0	Ricin Toxin	0	**	**
Hansen's Disease (Leprosy)	0	0	0	Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever	0	0	1
Hantavirus infection	0	0	0				
Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome	1	1	1				
Hepatitis A	2	2	12				

## Alachua County's Reportable Diseases Continued

Disease	2004 (Jan- June)	2003 (Jan- June)	2003 Cum	Disease	2004 (Jan- June)	2003 (Jan- June)	2003 Cum
Rubella	0	0	0	Tularemia	0	0	0
Salmonellosis	21	8	69	Typhoid Fever	0	0	0
Saxitoxin poisoning paralytic shell- fish poisonings	0	**	**	Typhus Fever	0	**	**
Shigellosis	3	21	62	Vaccinia Disease	0	**	**
Smallpox	0	0	0	<i>Vibrio</i> Infection	1	0	0
<i>Staphylococcus aureus, Vancomycin</i> <i>non-susceptible</i>	0	0	0	<i>V. cholerae</i> Serogroup Type 01 and non-01	0	0	0
<i>Staphylococcus</i> enterotoxin B	0	**	**	Viral Hemorrhagic Fever	0	0	0
Streptococcal Disease group A inva	0	0	9	Yellow Fever	0	0	0
<i>Streptococcal pneumoniae</i> invasive	12	5	4				
Syphilis	2	1	5				
Tetanus	0	0	0				
Toxoplasmosis (acute)	0	0	0				
Trichinosis	0	0	0				
Tuberculosis	0	3	6				

**Any disease outbreak** (e.g., in the community, hospital, or other institution; or foodborne or waterborne)

**Any grouping or clustering** of patients having similar diseases, symptoms or syndromes that may indicate the presence of a disease outbreak

\* A change in reporting recently occurred, these numbers are significantly higher than shown.

\*\* New reportable, no previous years data available.

06/JS



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