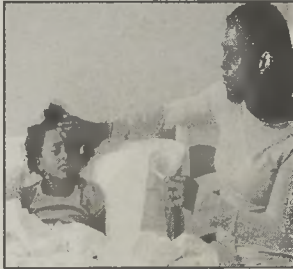


Is This Flu Season More Dangerous??

by Andrew M. Manis



The flu has been spreading fiercely across the United States, with more than half of states reporting widespread activity. The season has started earlier, and cases are more severe than last year, health officials say.

READ: 5 Natural Ways To Avoid The Flu

The latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention flu advisory report, which covers the week of December 23 to 29, suggests that 41 states have widespread influenza activity, which was an increase of 31 states from the

previous week. The CDC is expected to issue a statement about the situation.

There have so far been 2,257 hospitalizations associated with laboratory-confirmed flu virus, the CDC report said. Among children, there have been 18 deaths reported during this season.

In Massachusetts, one of the 29 states that the CDC has identified as having high activity of influenza-like illness, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino declared a public health emergency in the city because of the flu.

READ: Flu During Pregnancy Linked To Autism

Since October 1, there have been 700 confirmed influenza cases among Boston residents, according to Menino's office; that's 10 times more than were seen in all of last year's flu season.

Menino is collaborating with the Boston Public Health Commission and community health centers to offer free vaccination clinics this weekend. The mayor urged residents to stay home from work or school if they are sick, and to get their flu shots.

"This is the worst flu season we've seen since 2009, and people should take the threat of flu seriously," Menino said in a statement. More than 4% of emergency department

The Servant Leader Who Continues To Serve

By John Raye

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"When school integration took place, I was among that first group of Black teachers selected to teach in predominately white schools, the first one being Walkertown Jr. High School," he noted.

Pioneers, especially Black pioneers, are usually confronted with a variety of problems, all associated with being the proverbial, "first one". But Boone says school integration did not pose any serious problems for him.

"I really didn't have any problems with it myself. Now, there may have been problems around me, but I didn't have any problems with it," he said.

That could very be because of the manner in which he carried himself and also his ability as an outstanding music educator, especially when showcasing his talents on his favorite instrument, the trumpet.

But it was at Carver High School where Boone would create a lasting legacy. He taught there for 20 years, becoming the school's longest serving band director, and went on to teach music education to thousands of youngsters in a distinguished career that lasted some 30 years.

Boone's 30 year teaching career led some 27 schools to request his service. At Anderson Jr. High school, Boone scored another first by becoming that school's first band director. His love for his

craft and students as a music educator and role model was so renowned that he was voted Carver's "Teacher of The Year", not once, but three times! Later the school district itself would expand that honor by naming him "Teacher of the Year" for the district.

"He can hardly go anywhere outside of our home where people do not stop and want to talk to him"- said Sarah, his wife of some 62 years. "Wherever we go, we are bound to be stopped by some of his friends, colleagues or former students", she said. "They all want to speak with him, show their appreciation and inquire as to how he is doing".

Though Boone retired from the Winston-Salem/ Forsyth County School System after three decades of service, he did not retire from life. He became active in the Forsyth County Retired School Personnel by serving in a variety of positions including chorus director, vice-president and eventually president of the organization.

Wildly known for his music expertise, Boone has served as guest conductor of choirs for numerous churches including Goler Memorial AME Zion, Mars Hill, New Bethel, Shiloh and Goler Metropolitan AME Zion. Having conducted combined church choirs in concert, Boone somehow found time to serve on the board of directors for the W/S sympathy Orchestra.

Long active in his church, Boone has served as Moderator of the Concord and Salem Presbyteries. Currently, he is serving his second term as Moderator of the Grace Presbyterian Men's Ministry. A lifetime member of the NAACP and a 60 year member of his fraternity, Omega Psi Phi, Boone shows few signs of being ready to stop or slow down.

visits at Boston hospitals are from flu cases, up from 1% during non-flu season.

Massachusetts General Hospital has already counted 532 cases of flu among patients, which is more than the hospital saw in any of the previous three flu seasons, said spokeswoman Kristen Stanton.

Why Is The Flu Spreading Faster?

READ: When Is Your Cold Or Flu Contagious?

According to CDC Director Dr. Thomas Frieden, H3N2 is the predominant strain this year. It's generally associated with a severe flu season. "The strains we are seeing suggest this could be a bad flu year," Frieden said. "But this year's vaccine is an excellent match with the influenza that's circulating."

Dr. Melinda Wharton, Acting Director of CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, says current flu activity is highest in the South.

"We're seeing the highest level in the southeastern and south central region of the United States," she said. "Five states had high levels: Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and Texas. Moderate levels of illness have been recorded in Missouri and Georgia."

Flu cases typically peak in February, according to the CDC.

The CDC says about 123 million doses of the vaccine have already been distributed to health care providers, and about 112 million people have already been vaccinated.

Among doctors, nurses and pharmacists, about 80% to 90% have already been vaccinated, Frieden said, along with almost half of all pregnant women. The number of children being vaccinated has also increased. "I encourage everyone 6 months and up to get vaccinated," Frieden said.

Each year there are approximately 200,000 hospitalizations for flu-related illnesses.

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter"

Martin Luther King Jr.

Still, he has beaten the odds, overcoming a variety of physical ailments including kidney stones, bladder cancer, double-bypass heart surgery and a 4-day stay in a diabetic coma.

Acting like a man who does not know the meaning of quit or give up, Boone noted that his work is not yet finished. A certified bridge teacher and coach, he remains active in a variety of community-based social and civic organizations including the Forsyth County Emancipation Association where he recently completed a two year term as President.

"God still has something else for me to do, I suppose. I don't worry about these setbacks. The Lord's still keeping me here for a reason", he said. The recipient of numerous, honors, citations, recognitions and awards, this maestro of the music world continues to do what he set out to do so many years ago—to lead, teach and serve by example. A principal-centered man of enormous conviction, Boone's character and moral compass can best be seen in the expression made famous by the late noted social scientist, Hannibal Afrik who said, "if we are incorrect reality will correct us. But if we are serious, we will correct ourselves".

Looking back over a long career of public service, it's reasonable to assume that long ago, Rudolph Boone found a way not only to correct others, but also to correct himself.

And the music he made and taught continues to linger, long after the melody has died.

By John Raye

"I have decided to stick with love, hate is too great a burden to bear".

Martin Luther King, Jr.