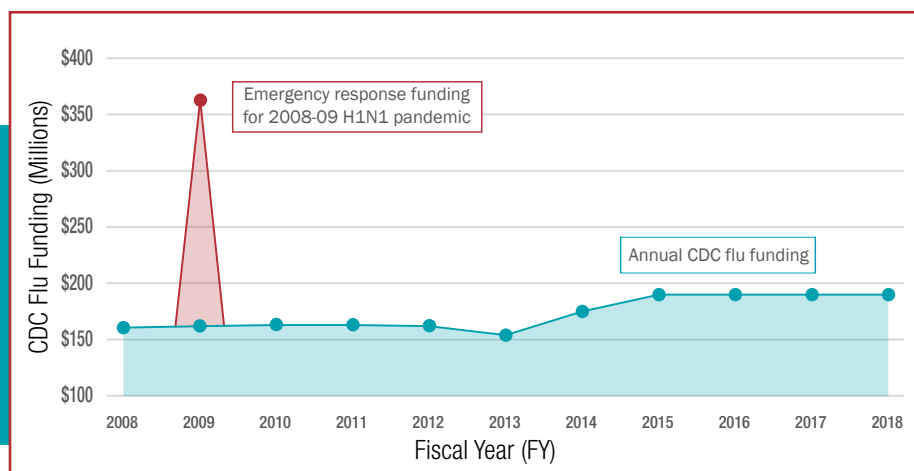


FLU TESTING AT PUBLIC HEALTH LABS

FUNDING SEASONAL FLU ENSURES PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS



Seasonal influenza (flu) has become an expected part of yearly disease response in the US, but occasionally an outbreak of a novel flu virus can spread to become a global pandemic. Public health laboratories — governmental labs at the federal, state, and local levels — are responsible for conducting surveillance and diagnostic testing for seasonal and pandemic flu viruses, providing critical data to inform flu vaccine selection. Funding for seasonal surveillance provides a critical foundation of workforce and infrastructure; without sufficient federal support and funding for seasonal flu, public health labs will never be adequately prepared to respond to unpredictable flu pandemics.



In any given year, flu may cause:

9.2–35.6 MILLION ILLNESSES

CDC, Disease Burden of Influenza, 2018



The 2017–18 flu season caused over:

900,000 HOSPITALIZATIONS

80,000 DEATHS



CDC, Flu News & Spotlights, 2018



One-time, emergency funding distributed by the federal government, allows public health labs to make great strides in laboratory surveillance and capacity, but these gains erode with relatively stagnant appropriations. Increased annual appropriations for seasonal flu would prevent our public health system from playing “catch-up” during a pandemic.

Flu funding currently supports:

Continuous Surveillance

Surveillance tells us where and what flu viruses are circulating, informing clinical treatment and public health interventions.

Advanced Molecular Detection

Genetic sequencing allows scientists to identify changes in circulating viruses to detect resistance to treatments and inform next season's vaccines.

Informatics

Electronic data exchanges standardize and automate data sharing between public health labs and CDC.

The International Reagent Resource

The IRR provides reagents, tools and other resources, which must be delivered in a timely and reliable manner to adequately study and detect flu viruses.

Increased funding will improve:



Surge Capacity & Pandemic Preparedness

Labs are often pushed to the brink during outbreaks due to the increased demand in testing and other lab services.



Infrastructure & Equipment Maintenance

Updates, preventive maintenance and inspections are required to ensure the quality and reliability of laboratory equipment and infrastructure systems.



Workforce Training & Support

An increase in qualified staff and continual training is necessary to meet surge demands and ensure staff are current with advancing technologies and methods.



Laboratory Testing Capabilities

Developments and improvements of laboratory tests are crucial in assessing vaccine effectiveness and detecting antiviral resistance.