

2 *SEASONAL DISEASES*

a Global influenza update—the northern hemisphere influenza season

Influenza activity in Europe started in November, and peaked early in the week starting 19 December 2016. In comparison the previous season started in the week commencing 8 February 2016. In North America the season also started in November 2016 with influenza activity still increasing. Influenza A (H3N2) is presently dominant in both Europe and North America, as well as in northern Africa, east, south-east, and south Asia, with 98.7% of influenza A isolates subtyped as A(H3N2) by national influenza laboratories from 74 countries. Travellers to the northern hemisphere should receive the

influenza vaccine. This season, the 2016 southern hemisphere influenza formulation is identical to the 2016/7 northern hemisphere vaccine, therefore South African travellers to the northern hemisphere may use locally-acquired vaccine prior to travel.

Source: Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis, NICD-NHLS; (cherylc@nicd.ac.za)