

## **Flu more widespread in US; eases off in some areas**

MIKE STOBBE - AP Medical Writer - Associated Press

Health officials say flu is more widespread across the nation, but the number of hard-hit states has declined.

Flu season started early this winter, and includes a strain that tends to make people sicker.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Friday said flu was widespread in 47 states last week, up from 41 the week before. But many cases may be mild. The only states without widespread flu are California, Mississippi and Hawaii.

The hardest hit states dropped to 24 from 29.

So far, 20 children have died from the flu. There is no running tally of adult deaths, but the CDC estimates that the flu kills about 24,000 people in an average year.

Experts say it's too early to say if this is a bad year.

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