

Puerto Rico declares flu epidemic as cases spike. 42 dead and more than 900 hospitalized since July

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Puerto Rico health officials on Thursday declared an influenza epidemic in the U.S. territory.

At least 25,900 cases have been reported since July, with 42 deaths and more than 900 hospitalizations on the island of 3.2 million people, Health Secretary Carlos Mellado said.

Epidemiologist Melissa Marzán noted that officials have seen nearly six times more cases so far this year compared with the same period last year.

Those who are 0 to 19 years old have been most affected, with more than 13,600 cases reported in that population, Mellado said.

Health officials said there were plenty of vaccines, tests and treatments available on the island.

A record 53,708 influenza cases were reported in 2015 in Puerto Rico.

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