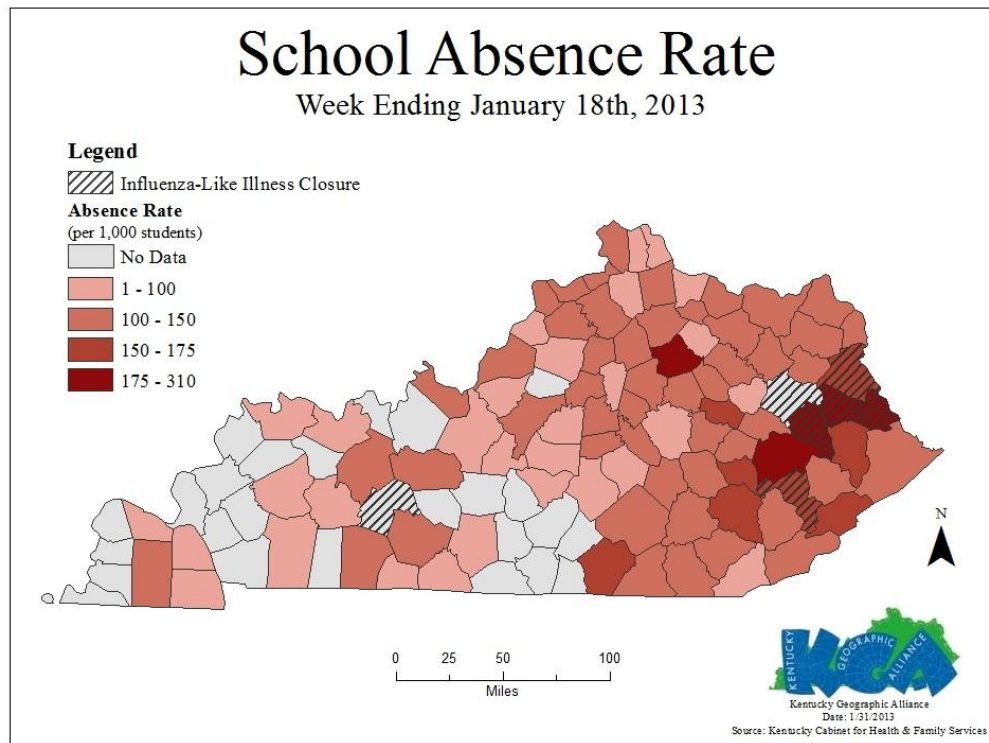

KENTUCKY IN THE NEWS

The Kentucky Geographic Alliance -- January 2013



In the recent [news](#), many reports about influenza have provided opportunity to see how Kentucky compares to other states in the US. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed a Geographic Information Systems ([GIS](#)) model to show influenza-like illness (ILI). The pattern of illness starts in the South, and quickly spreads throughout the US. If you compare Kentucky regionally, you can see that ILI activity level is lower than surrounding states.

There is also wide variability within the state. Although schools sometimes report flu outbreaks, tracking the specific numbers is difficult for the CDC. During the week ending January 18th, the most complete statistic available in Kentucky by county is general school absence rates, which have been included in the map above. Additionally, the map has included reported school closures due to ILI.

Geographers are interested in many topics in our world, and health-related issues in our region can show many patterns. Geoscientists study these types of statistics to develop models to estimate future trends. The Kentucky Geographic Alliance has [recently signed an agreement](#) with Esri, a leading GIS firm to provide software to Kentucky schools. Following a training program, teachers will be able to develop a GIS for Kentucky similar to the US model developed by the CDC referenced above. It is activities like these that help students understand and prepare for future jobs while better understanding how to protect their [health](#). In the future, your students could be developing [social media](#) sights to map out issues like ILI or they could help dispel some [myths](#) about flu shots.

- Lexington Herald-Leader: [Flu Widespread in Kentucky, but Health Professionals are Managing](#)
- Kentucky Cabinet for Health & Family Services: [Influenza - Flu](#)