

2017-2018 Community Influenza Surveillance Report Update of Current Status April 11th, 2018

Overall assessment

While influenza continues to circulate in the Middlesex-London region at low levels, it appears that the flu season is winding down.

Analysis and Action

As the influenza season begins to wane, local residents can still take a number of steps to avoid becoming sick. Handwashing is an effective way to prevent many illnesses, including influenza. As well, local residents should stay home when they feel sick, cover coughs and sneezes, and clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces frequently.

Details of Current Local Activity

Between April 1st and 7th there were 17 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza A reported to the Health Unit. There were also 10 hospitalizations reported last week, as well as two deaths. Please note that due to the retrospective nature of reporting, the week in which hospitalizations and deaths are reported to the Health Unit may not be the same as the week in which they occurred.

Since September 1st, 2017, there have been 396 laboratory-confirmed influenza A cases, 417 cases of influenza B, and six cases infected with both influenza A and B, reported to the Health Unit. Among these cases there have been 429 hospitalizations and 42 deaths; all deaths to date have been among individuals 50 years of age and over. Over this time period, there have also been 31 influenza A outbreaks, 29 influenza B outbreaks, and seven outbreaks with both influenza A and B declared in hospitals, long-term care facilities, and retirement homes.

Appendix A provides more detail about laboratory-based influenza activity indicators, as well as other local indicators of respiratory illness. A graph showing all 819 laboratory-confirmed cases by week of illness onset is provided at the end of this report in Appendix B.

Useful Websites

- The latest Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin, issued by Public Health Ontario (PHO), is available at <http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/SurveillanceServices/Pages/Ontario-Respiratory-Virus-Bulletin.aspx>
- The latest FluWatch report, issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), is available at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/>.
- To find a free flu shot clinic near you, visit the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's "Get the flu shot" web page at <http://www.ontario.ca/page/get-flu-shot/>.

Appendix A

Summary of Community Influenza Surveillance Indicators for Middlesex-London April 1st to 7th, 2018

Table 1: Summary of laboratory-based influenza activity indicators, Middlesex-London and Ontario, 2017-2018 influenza surveillance season

Indicator	Reporting Period	Number Reported: <i>Current Reporting Period</i>	Number Reported: <i>Year to Date (from September 1, 2017)</i>	Recent Trends
Laboratory-confirmed cases^{1,4}	Apr. 1-7 (week 14) ²	Influenza A – 17 cases Influenza B – 0 cases Influenza A & B – 0 cases	Influenza A – 396 cases Influenza B – 417 cases Influenza A & B – 6 cases	Influenza A: Higher than the previous week (Mar. 25-31) when 16 cases were reported. Influenza B: Lower than the previous week (Mar. 25-31) when four cases were reported.
Influenza sub-types¹	Apr. 1-7	Influenza A (H3) – 2 cases Influenza A not yet subtyped – 15 cases Influenza B not yet subtyped – 0 cases	Influenza A – (H3) – 71 cases (H1N1)pdm09 – 2 cases Not subtyped – 323 cases Influenza B – Phuket/3073/13-like – 1 case Not subtyped – 416 cases	
Hospitalizations^{1,5}	Apr. 1-7	10	429	Lower than the previous week (Mar. 25-31) when 13 hospitalizations were reported.
Deaths^{1,5}	Apr. 1-7	2	42	Higher than the previous week (Mar. 25-31) when one death was reported.
Influenza outbreaks in long-term care homes/retirement homes/acute care	Apr. 1-7	Influenza A – 2 outbreaks Influenza B – 0 outbreaks Influenza A & B – 0 outbreaks	Influenza A – 31 outbreaks Influenza B – 29 outbreaks Influenza A&B – 7 outbreaks	Influenza A: Same as the previous week (Mar. 25-31) when two outbreaks were reported. Influenza B: Same as the previous week (Mar. 25-31) when no outbreaks were reported.
Percentage of samples that are positive for influenza (Ontario)³	Mar. 25-31 (week 13) ²	Influenza A – 11.2% positivity Influenza B – 7.8% positivity	N/A	Influenza A: Similar to 11.6% positivity reported in the previous reporting period (Mar. 18-24). Influenza B: Similar to 7.4% positivity reported in the previous reporting period (Mar. 18-24).

Notes:

1 Numbers are subject to change week by week due to the retrospective nature of reporting.

2 Weekly influenza monitoring often uses numbered weeks from 1 to 52 weeks per year. A reference week calendar can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza/influenza-surveillance/fluwatch-weeks-calendar.html>

3 Public Health Ontario, Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin 2017-2018

4 The week cases are reported to the Health Unit may not be the same as week of illness onset.

5 The week hospitalizations and deaths are reported to the Health Unit may not be the same as the week in which they occurred, or the same as the week of illness onset.

Table 2: Summary of community-based respiratory illness indicators, Middlesex-London, 2017-2018 influenza surveillance season

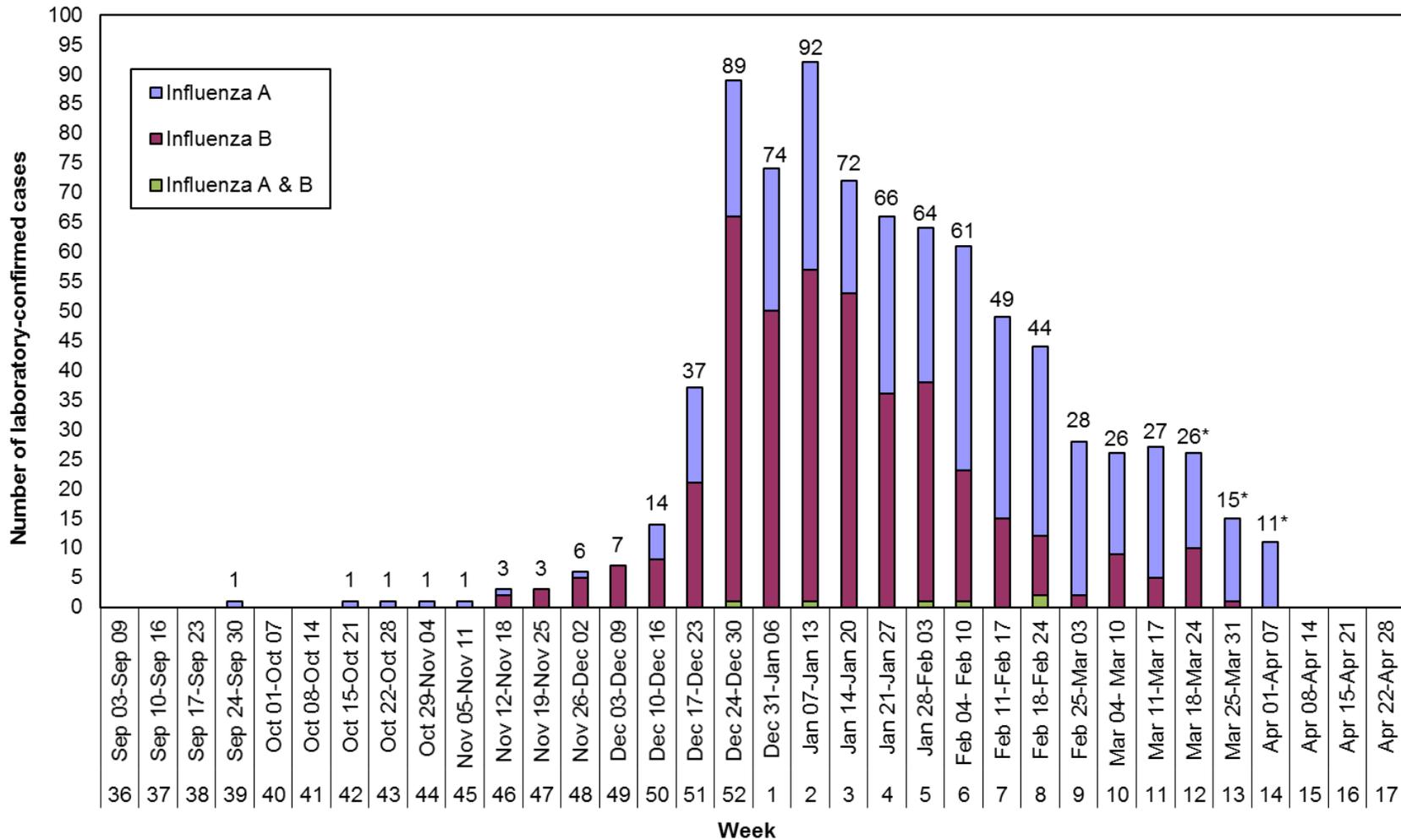
Indicator	Reporting Period	Number Reported: <i>Current Reporting Period</i>	Recent Trends
Hospital emergency room reports regarding the percentage of patients with fever and respiratory illness	Apr. 1-7	An average of 6.8% of patients presented with fever and respiratory symptoms. The proportion was highest at the pediatric emergency department, where 15.6% of patients presented with a fever and respiratory symptoms.	Lower than 7.3% reported the previous week (Mar. 25-31). Lower than 18.5% reported the previous week (Mar. 25-31).
Absence reports from elementary schools (i.e., absenteeism > 10%)	Apr. 2-6	Twenty-three elementary schools from one school board reported average absenteeism (due to all causes) exceeding 10%.	Higher than the previous week (Mar. 26-30) when 17 elementary schools reported increased absenteeism.

The Middlesex-London Health Unit gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following community partners who provide data for this report:

London Health Sciences Centre
 St. Joseph's Health Care London
 Thames Valley District School Board

Appendix B

Laboratory-confirmed influenza cases, by influenza date† Middlesex-London 2017-2018 influenza season (N=819)



Data source: Middlesex-London Health Unit internal influenza tracking database, extracted April 10, 2018.

† 'Influenza date' is the earliest of: symptom onset date, specimen collection date, and reported date. As a result, the weekly counts shown in this section differ from those provided in other sections of this report.

* Counts may be incomplete and are subject to change due to the retrospective nature of reporting.