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## 2019-2020 Community Influenza Surveillance Report

### Update of Current Status

### January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

#### First report of 2020

This is the first *Community Influenza Surveillance Report* of 2020 and covers the three-week period that includes December 15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, December 22<sup>nd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, and December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

#### Overall Assessment

Influenza activity in the Middlesex-London region has increased over the past three weeks, with both influenza A and B cases being reported from across the London and Middlesex region.

#### Analysis and Action

Ontario's influenza season is well under way, with flu activity increasing across the province. If they haven't already done so, local residents are encouraged to get their seasonal influenza vaccine as soon as possible, since it takes about two weeks for the vaccine to provide protection.

Regardless of the level of local influenza activity, there are a number of easy-to-follow steps that local residents can take to avoid becoming sick throughout the year. While washing your hands with soap and warm water, or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, remain effective ways to prevent many illnesses, including influenza, local residents should also cover their coughs and sneezes, clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces frequently, and stay home when they feel sick.

#### Details of Current Local Activity

As this report covers three weeks of influenza surveillance, the details of local activity for each week are as follows:

- Between December 15<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, there were eight laboratory-confirmed influenza A and one influenza B case reported to the Health Unit, six of whom were hospitalized. One influenza A outbreak was reported.
- Between December 22<sup>nd</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, there were 22 influenza A and nine influenza B cases reported, 13 of whom were hospitalized; one death was also reported. In addition, one influenza outbreak was reported; both influenza A and B were detected.
- Between December 29<sup>th</sup> and January 4<sup>th</sup>, there were 14 influenza A and 13 influenza B cases reported, four of whom were hospitalized; one death was also reported. There was also one influenza A outbreak was declared.

Appendix A provides more detail about laboratory-based influenza activity indicators for the last three reporting weeks, as well as other local indicators of respiratory illness. A graph showing all 76 laboratory-confirmed cases by week of illness onset is provided at the end of this report in Appendix B.

#### Provincial and National Comparison

In the most recent *Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin* (covering December 22<sup>nd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>), Public Health Ontario states that influenza levels are higher when compared to previous weeks. Activity is moderate for influenza A and low for influenza B.

In the most recent *FluWatch* (covering December 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup>), the Public Health Agency of Canada reports that 61% of cases identified so far this season are influenza A, with 68% of subtyped specimens being the A(H3N2) strain. Influenza B has been identified in 39% of cases this season. The greatest percentage of influenza A(H3N2) cases (45%) have been among those aged 65 and over, while 93% of influenza B cases have been among those under the age of 45.

- The latest *Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin*, issued by Public Health Ontario (PHO), is available at <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/data-and-analysis/commonly-used-products/respiratory-pathogens-weekly>
- The latest *FluWatch* report, issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), is available at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/>

**Appendix A**  
**Summary of Community Influenza Surveillance Indicators for Middlesex-London**  
**December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**Table 1: Summary of laboratory-based influenza activity indicators, Middlesex-London and Ontario, 2019-2020 influenza surveillance season**

Indicator	Reporting Period	Number Reported: <i>Current Reporting Period</i>	Number Reported: <i>Year to Date</i> <i>(from September 1, 2019)</i>	Recent Trends
<b>Laboratory-confirmed cases<sup>1, 4</sup></b>	Dec. 15-21 (week 51) <sup>2</sup>	Influenza A – 8 cases Influenza B – 1 case	Influenza A – 52 cases Influenza B – 24 cases	Influenza A: <b>Lower</b> in the most recent week compared to the previous week (Dec. 22-28) when 22 cases were reported.  Influenza B: <b>Higher</b> in the most recent week compared to the previous week (Dec. 22-28) when nine cases were reported.
	Dec. 22-28 (week 52) <sup>2</sup>	Influenza A – 22 cases Influenza B – 9 cases		
	Dec. 29-Jan. 4 (week 1) <sup>2</sup>	Influenza A – 14 cases Influenza B – 13 cases		
<b>Influenza sub-types<sup>1</sup></b>	Dec. 15-21	- Influenza A (H1N1)pdm09 – 4 cases - Influenza A (H3) – 0 cases - Influenza A not yet subtyped – 4 cases - Influenza B not yet subtyped – 1 case	Influenza A (H1N1)pdm09 – 16 cases  Influenza A (H3) – 5 cases  Influenza A not yet subtyped – 31 cases  Influenza B not yet subtyped – 24 cases	N/A
	Dec. 22-28	- Influenza A (H1N1)pdm09 – 5 cases - Influenza A (H3) – 1 case - Influenza A not yet subtyped – 16 cases - Influenza B not yet subtyped – 9 cases		
	Dec. 29-Jan. 4	- Influenza A (H1N1)pdm09 – 2 cases - Influenza A (H3) – 3 cases - Influenza A not yet subtyped – 9 cases - Influenza B not yet subtyped – 13 cases		

**Table 1: Summary of laboratory-based influenza activity indicators, Middlesex-London and Ontario, 2019-2020 influenza surveillance season (continued)**

Indicator	Reporting Period	Number Reported: Current Reporting Period	Number Reported: Year to Date (from September 1, 2019)	Recent Trends
<b>Hospitalizations<sup>1,5</sup></b>	Dec. 15-21	6	28	<b>Lower</b> in the most recent week compared to the previous week (Dec. 22-28) when 13 hospitalizations were reported.
	Dec. 22-28	13		
	Dec. 29-Jan. 4	4		
<b>Deaths<sup>1,5</sup></b>	Dec. 15-21	0	2	<b>Same</b> in the most recent week compared to the previous week (Dec. 22-28) when one death was reported.
	Dec. 22-28	1		
	Dec. 29-Jan. 4	1		
<b>Influenza outbreaks in long-term care homes/retirement homes/acute care</b>	Dec. 15-21	Influenza A – 1 outbreak Influenza B – 0 outbreaks Influenza A & B – 0 outbreaks	Influenza A – 2 outbreaks Influenza B – 0 outbreaks Influenza A & B – 1 outbreak	Influenza A: <b>Higher</b> in the most recent week compared to the previous week (Dec. 22-28) when no outbreaks were reported.
	Dec. 22-28	Influenza A – 0 outbreaks Influenza B – 0 outbreaks Influenza A & B – 1 outbreak		Influenza B: <b>Same</b> in the most recent week compared to the previous week (Dec. 22-28) when no outbreaks were reported.
	Dec. 29-Jan. 4	Influenza A – 1 outbreak Influenza B – 0 outbreaks Influenza A & B – 0 outbreaks		Influenza A & B: <b>Lower</b> in the most recent week compared to the previous week (Dec. 22-28) when one outbreak was reported.
<b>Percentage of samples that are positive for influenza (Ontario)<sup>3</sup></b>	Dec. 8-14 (week 50) <sup>2</sup>	Influenza A – 5.8% positivity Influenza B – 2.3% positivity	N/A	Influenza A: <b>Higher</b> in the most recent week compared to 5.8% positivity reported the previous week (Dec. 8-14).
	Dec. 15-21 (week 51) <sup>2</sup>	Influenza A – 11.3% positivity Influenza B – 3.3% positivity		Influenza B: <b>Higher</b> in the most recent week compared to 2.3% positivity reported the previous week (Dec. 8-14).
	Dec. 22-28 (week 52) <sup>2</sup>	Influenza A – data not available Influenza B – data not available		

**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 2019-2020

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, 2018-2019 influenza surveillance season**

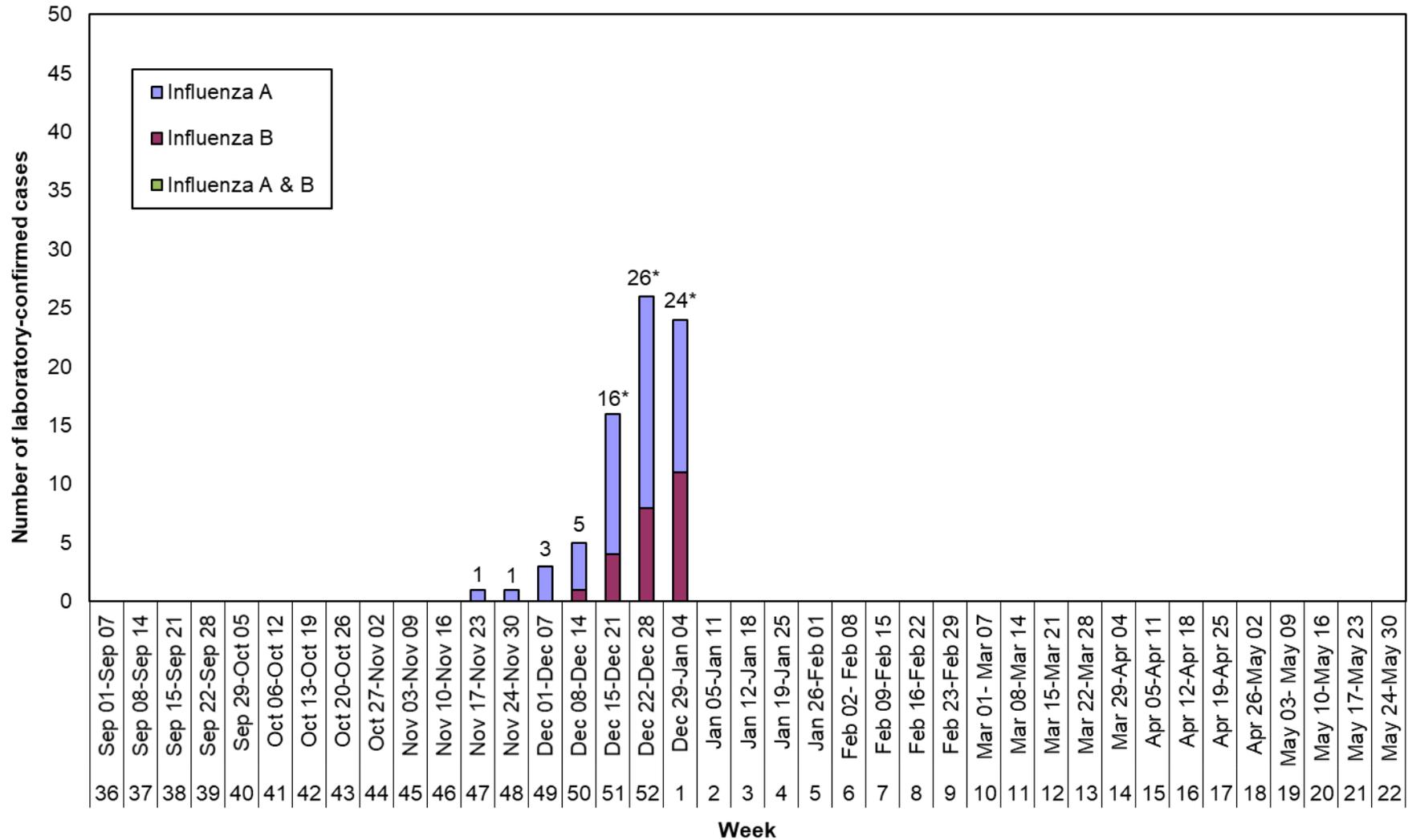
Indicator	Reporting Period	Number Reported: <i>Current Reporting Period</i>	Recent Trends
<b>Hospital emergency room reports regarding the percentage of patients with fever and respiratory illness</b>	Dec. 15-21	All sites – An average of 12.3% of patients presented with fever and respiratory symptoms. Paediatric ED – An average of 36.7% of patients presented with fever and respiratory symptoms.	All sites: <b>Lower</b> in the most recent week compared to 17.7% reported the previous week (Dec. 22-28).  Paediatric ED: <b>Lower</b> in the most recent week compared to 47.6% reported the previous week (Dec. 22-28).
	Dec. 22-28	All sites – An average of 17.7% of patients presented with fever and respiratory symptoms. Paediatric ED – An average of 47.6% of patients presented with fever and respiratory symptoms.	
	Dec. 29-Jan. 4	All sites – An average of 16.4% of patients presented with fever and respiratory symptoms. Paediatric ED – An average of 41.1% of patients presented with fever and respiratory symptoms.	
<b>Absence reports from elementary schools (i.e., absenteeism &gt; 10%)</b>	Dec. 16-20	Data not available.	Schools were closed from Dec. 23, 2019 to Jan. 3, 2020, therefore recent absenteeism results are not yet available.

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 2019-2020 influenza season (N=76)



Source: Middlesex-London Health Unit internal influenza tracking database, extracted January 6, 2020.

† 'Influenza date' is the earliest of: symptom onset date, specimen collection date, specimen result date, and reported date. As such, 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.