
2017-2018 Community Influenza Surveillance Report Update of Current Status March 7th, 2018

Overall assessment

The level of influenza activity continues to be moderate in the Middlesex-London region. Influenza B activity appears to have peaked for the season, and there are signs that influenza A activity may also be declining.

Analysis and Action

The Health Unit continues to recommend quadrivalent inactivated influenza vaccine (QIV) for all unimmunized individuals. In addition to being immunized, local residents can also take a number of other steps to prevent becoming sick. Handwashing is an effective way to prevent many illnesses, including influenza. In addition, 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 February 25th and March 3rd, there were 19 laboratory confirmed cases of influenza A, 5 cases of influenza B, and one case of an individual infected with both influenza A and B, reported to the Health Unit. There were also 20 hospitalizations and eight deaths reported. 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 305 laboratory-confirmed influenza A cases, 384 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 348 hospitalizations and 37 deaths; all deaths to date have been among cases 50 years of age and over. Over this time period, there have also been 24 influenza A outbreaks, 27 influenza B outbreaks, and five 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 695 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 February 25th to March 3rd, 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}	Feb. 25-Mar. 3 (week 9) ²	Influenza A – 19 cases Influenza B – 5 cases Influenza A&B – 1 case	Influenza A – 305 cases Influenza B – 384 cases Influenza A & B – 6 cases	Influenza A: Lower than the previous week (Feb. 18-24) when 44 cases were reported. Influenza B: Lower than the previous week (Feb. 18-24) when 10 cases were reported.
Influenza sub-types¹	Feb. 25-Mar. 3	Influenza A not subtyped – 19 cases Influenza B not subtyped – 5 cases	Influenza A – (H3) – 57 cases (H1N1)pdm09 – 2 cases Not subtyped – 246 cases Influenza B – Phuket/3073/13-like –1 case Not subtyped – 383 cases	
Hospitalizations^{1,5}	Feb. 25-Mar. 3	20	348	Lower than the previous week (Feb. 18-24) when 23 hospitalizations were reported.
Deaths^{1,5}	Feb. 25-Mar. 3	8	37	Higher than the previous week (Feb. 18-24) when two deaths were reported.
Influenza outbreaks in long-term care homes/retirement homes/acute care	Feb. 25-Mar. 3	Influenza A – 1 outbreak Influenza B – 0 outbreaks Influenza A&B – 0 outbreaks	Influenza A – 24 outbreaks Influenza B – 27 outbreaks Influenza A&B – 5 outbreaks	Influenza A: Lower than the previous week (Feb. 18-24) when six outbreaks were reported. Influenza B: Same as the previous week (Feb. 18-24) when no outbreaks were reported.
Percentage of samples that are positive for influenza (Ontario)³	Feb. 18-24 (week 8) ²	Influenza A – 15.4% positivity Influenza B – 12.5% positivity	N/A	Influenza A: Lower than 16.0% positivity reported in the previous reporting period (Feb. 4-10). Influenza B: Lower than 14.3% positivity reported in the previous reporting period (Feb. 4-10).

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

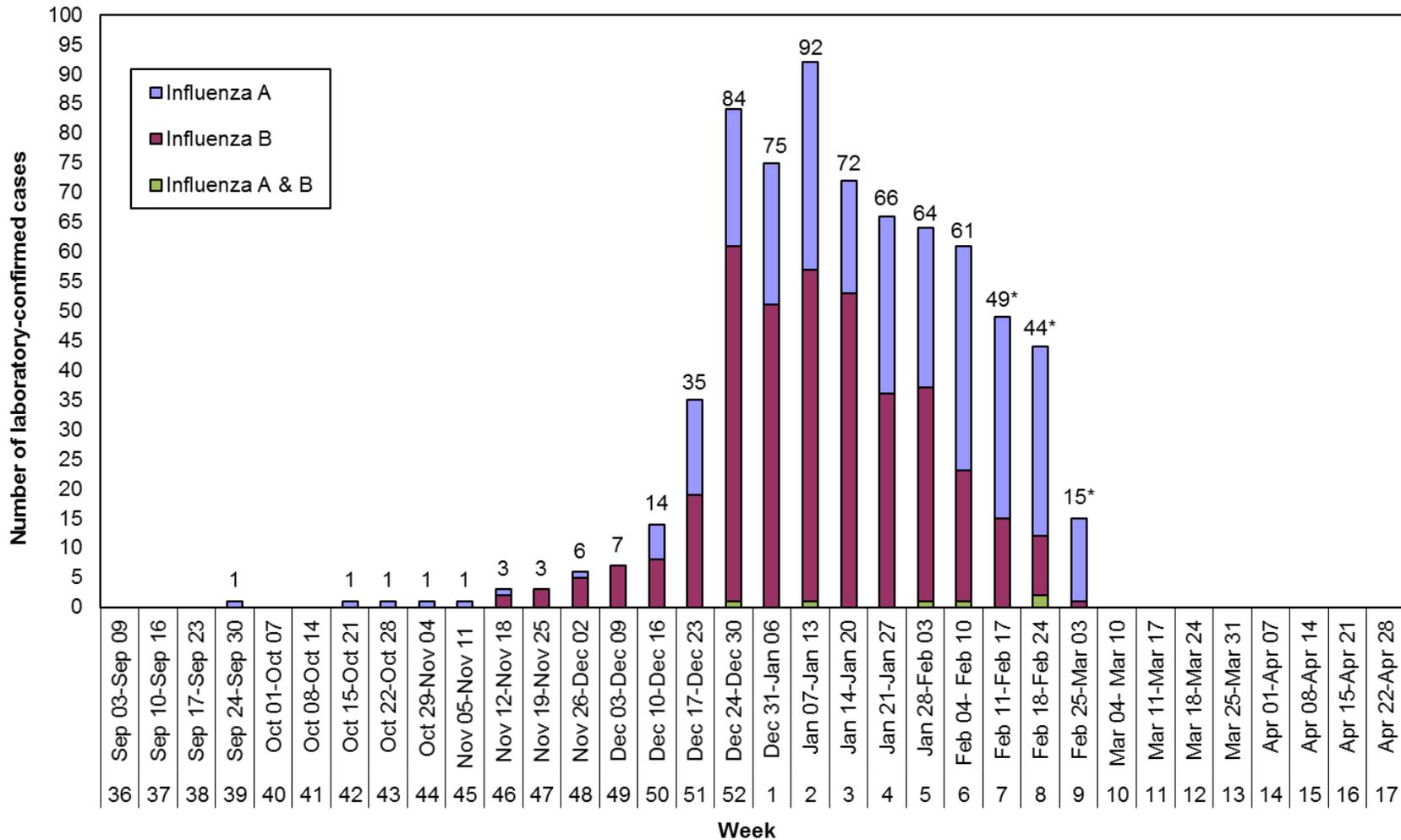
Indicator	Reporting Period	Number Reported: <i>Current Reporting Period</i>	Recent Trends
Hospital emergency room reports regarding the percentage of patients with fever and respiratory illness	Feb. 25-Mar. 3	An average of 9.1% of patients presented with fever and respiratory symptoms. The proportion was highest at the pediatric emergency department, where 25.8% of patients presented with a fever and respiratory symptoms.	Lower than 10.8% reported the previous week (Feb. 18-24). Lower than 30.3% reported the previous week (Feb. 18-24).
Absence reports from elementary schools (i.e., absenteeism > 10%)	Feb. 26-Mar. 2	Twenty-seven elementary schools from one school board reported average absenteeism (due to all causes) exceeding 10%	Higher than the previous week (Feb. 20-23), when 25 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=695)



Data source: Middlesex-London Health Unit internal influenza tracking database, extracted March 6, 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.