
2017-2018 Community Influenza Surveillance Report Update of Current Status February 14, 2018

Overall assessment

The level of influenza activity continues to be high in the Middlesex-London region.

Analysis and Action

The level of influenza activity continues to be high, not only in the Middlesex-London area, but across Canada, with large numbers of laboratory-confirmed cases, hospitalizations, and institutional outbreaks being reported. However, the number of influenza B cases reported in Middlesex-London has been declining gradually since the beginning of 2018, while the number of influenza A cases being reported continues to fluctuate.

As mentioned in last week's report, quadrivalent inactivated influenza vaccine (QIV) is now recommended for all unimmunized individuals, rather than the trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine (TIV). All unimmunized hospital, long-term care and retirement home staff in the Middlesex-London region remain a high priority for immunization. Local residents who have not yet received their seasonal influenza immunization are encouraged to do so. There is no evidence to support the need to re-vaccinate individuals who have already received TIV.

In addition to getting immunized, local residents can take a number of other steps to prevent becoming sick. Handwashing is an effective way to prevent many illnesses, including influenza. 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 4th and 10th, there were 37 laboratory confirmed cases of influenza A and 25 cases of influenza B reported to the Health Unit. There were also 30 hospitalizations, but no 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 209 laboratory-confirmed influenza A cases, 348 cases of influenza B, and three cases infected with both influenza A and B, reported to the Health Unit. Among these cases there have been 275 hospitalizations and 23 deaths. During this same time period, there have been 15 influenza A outbreaks, 27 influenza B outbreaks, and four 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 560 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 4th to 10th, 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. 4-10 (week 6) ²	Influenza A – 37 cases Influenza B – 25 cases Influenza A&B – 1 case	Influenza A – 209 cases Influenza B – 348 cases Influenza A & B – 3 cases	Influenza A: Higher than the previous week (Jan. 28-Feb. 3) when 28 cases were reported. Influenza B: Lower than the previous week (Jan. 28-Feb. 3) when 37 cases were reported.
Influenza sub-types¹	Feb. 4-10	Influenza A(H3) – 1 case Influenza A not subtyped – 36 cases Influenza B not subtyped – 25 cases	Influenza A – (H3) – 43 cases (H1N1)pdm09 – 1 case Not subtyped – 165 cases Influenza B – Phuket/3073/13-like – 1 case Not subtyped – 347 cases	
Hospitalizations^{1,5}	Feb. 4-10	30	275	Same as the previous week (Jan. 28-Feb. 3) when 30 hospitalizations were reported.
Deaths^{1,5}	Feb. 4-10	0	23	Lower than the previous week (Jan. 28-Feb. 3) when four deaths were reported.
Influenza outbreaks in long-term care homes/retirement homes/acute care	Feb. 4-10	Influenza A – 1 outbreak Influenza B – 4 outbreaks Influenza A&B – 0 outbreaks	Influenza A – 15 outbreaks Influenza B – 27 outbreaks Influenza A&B – 4 outbreaks	Influenza A: Lower than the previous week (Jan. 28-Feb. 3) when two outbreaks were reported. Influenza B: Higher than the previous week (Jan. 28-Feb. 3) when no outbreaks were reported.
Percentage of samples that are positive for influenza (Ontario)³	Jan. 28-Feb. 3 (week 5) ²	Influenza A – 14.6% positivity Influenza B – 14.2% positivity	N/A	Influenza A: Lower than 15.8% positivity reported in the previous reporting period (Jan. 21-27). Influenza B: Higher than 13.0% positivity reported in the previous reporting period (Jan. 21-27).

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

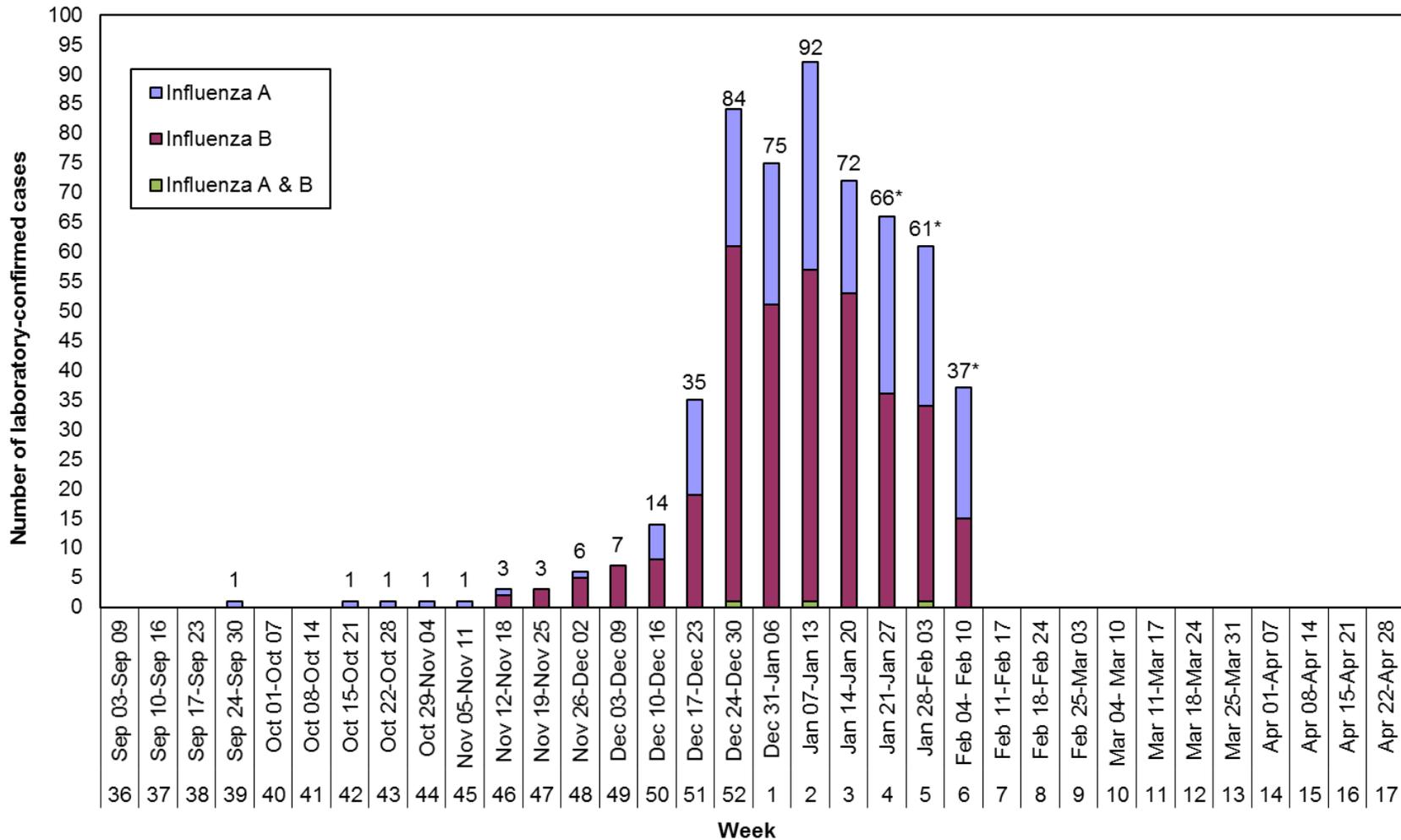
Indicator	Reporting Period	Number Reported: <i>Current Reporting Period</i>	Recent Trends
Hospital emergency room reports regarding the percentage of patients with fever and respiratory illness	Feb. 4-10	An average of 11.7% of patients presented with fever and respiratory symptoms. The proportion was highest at the pediatric emergency department, where 28.8% of patients presented with a fever and respiratory symptoms.	Similar to 11.5% reported the previous week (Jan. 28-Feb. 3). Lower than 30.3% reported the previous week (Jan. 28-Feb. 3).
Absence reports from elementary schools (i.e., absenteeism > 10%)	Feb. 5-9	Data not reported due to weather-related transportation delays and cancellations effecting 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=560)



Data source: Middlesex-London Health Unit internal influenza tracking database, extracted February 12, 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.