
2017-2018 Community Influenza Surveillance Report Update of Current Status February 28, 2018

Overall assessment

The level of influenza activity is currently moderate in the Middlesex-London region. There are signs that influenza B activity may have peaked for the season, however, the Health Unit continues to receive numerous reports of influenza A cases.

Analysis and Action

The number of influenza B cases reported in Middlesex-London has been in decline since the beginning of 2018, but the number of influenza A cases being reported locally has varied from week to week, with the number reported last week being comparable to those from the beginning of 2018.

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 18th and 24th, there were 44 laboratory confirmed cases of influenza A, 10 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 23 hospitalizations and two 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 286 laboratory-confirmed influenza A cases, 379 cases of influenza B, and five cases infected with both influenza A and B, reported to the Health Unit. Among these cases there have been 328 hospitalizations and 29 deaths; all deaths to date have been among cases 50 years of age and over. Over this time period, there have also been 23 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 670 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 18th to 24th, 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. 18-24 (week 8) ²	Influenza A – 44 cases Influenza B – 10 cases Influenza A&B – 1 case	Influenza A – 286 cases Influenza B – 379 cases Influenza A & B – 5 cases	Influenza A: Higher than the previous week (Feb. 11-17) when 33 cases were reported. Influenza B: Lower than the previous week (Feb. 11-17) when 21 cases were reported.
Influenza sub-types¹	Feb. 18-24	Influenza A(H3) – 4 cases Influenza A not subtyped – 40 cases Influenza B not subtyped – 10 cases	Influenza A – (H3) – 57 cases (H1N1)pdm09 – 2 cases Not subtyped – 227 cases Influenza B – Phuket/3073/13-like – 1 case Not subtyped – 378 cases	
Hospitalizations^{1, 5}	Feb. 18-24	23	328	Lower than the previous week (Feb. 11-17) when 27 hospitalizations were reported.
Deaths^{1, 5}	Feb. 18-24	2	29	Lower than the previous week (Feb. 11-17) when four deaths were reported.
Influenza outbreaks in long-term care homes/retirement homes/acute care	Feb. 18-24	Influenza A – 6 outbreaks Influenza B – 0 outbreaks Influenza A&B – 0 outbreaks	Influenza A – 23 outbreaks Influenza B – 27 outbreaks Influenza A&B – 5 outbreaks	Influenza A: Higher than the previous week (Feb. 11-17) when one outbreak was reported. Influenza B: Same as the previous week (Feb. 11-17) when no outbreaks were reported.
Percentage of samples that are positive for influenza (Ontario)³	Feb. 11-17 (week 7) ²	Influenza A – 16.0% positivity Influenza B – 14.3% positivity	N/A	Influenza A: Similar to 16.5% positivity reported in the previous reporting period (Feb. 4-10). Influenza B: Similar to 14.0% 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

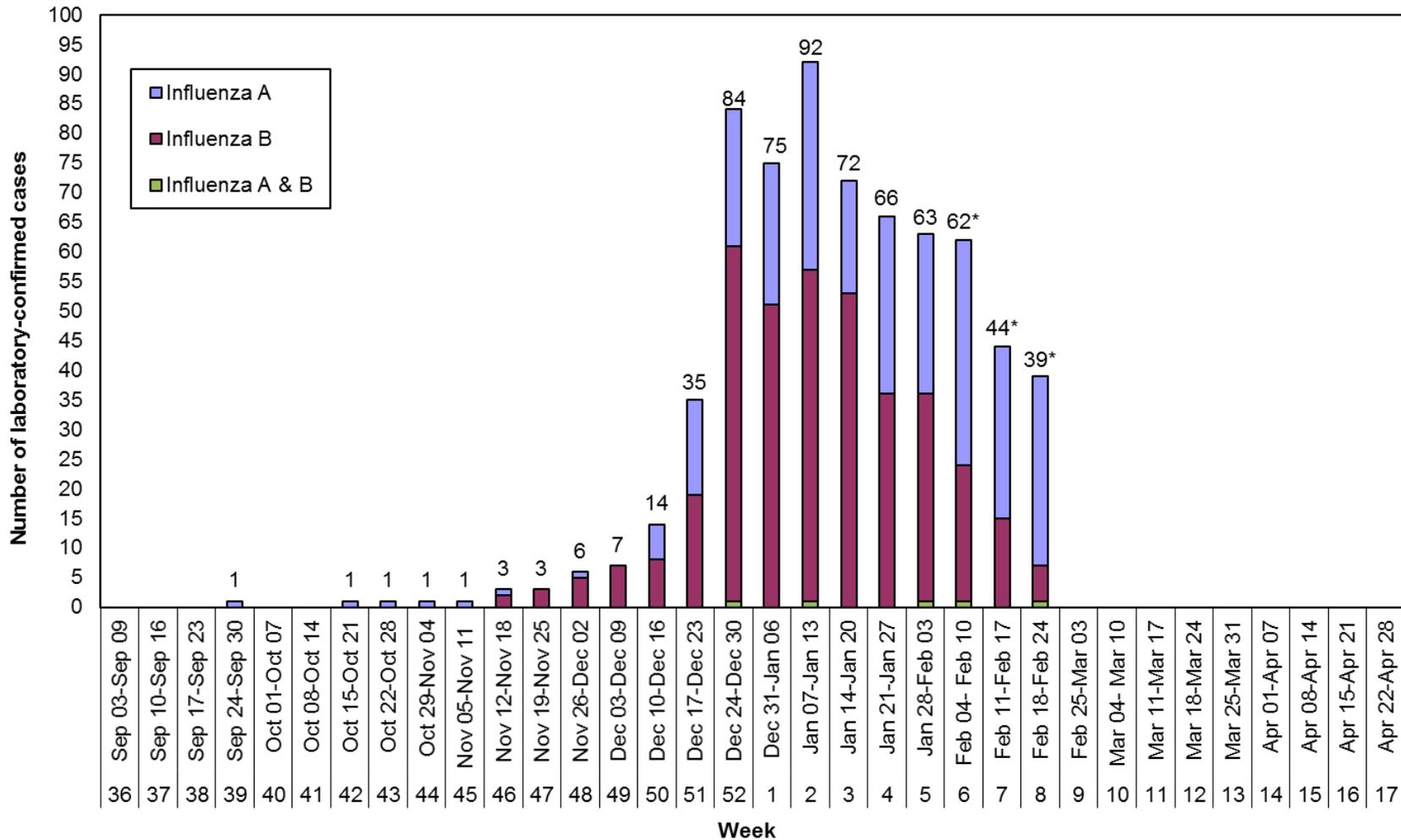
Indicator	Reporting Period	Number Reported: <i>Current Reporting Period</i>	Recent Trends
Hospital emergency room reports regarding the percentage of patients with fever and respiratory illness	Feb. 18-24	An average of 10.8% of patients presented with fever and respiratory symptoms. The proportion was highest at the pediatric emergency department, where 30.3% of patients presented with a fever and respiratory symptoms.	Similar to 10.3% reported the previous week (Feb. 11-17). Similar to 30.7% reported the previous week (Feb. 11-17).
Absence reports from elementary schools (i.e., absenteeism > 10%)	Feb. 20-23	Twenty-five elementary schools from one school board reported average absenteeism (due to all causes) exceeding 10%	Lower than the previous week (Feb. 12-16), when 26 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=670)



Data source: Middlesex-London Health Unit internal influenza tracking database, extracted February 27, 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.