

2017-2018 Community Influenza Surveillance Report Update of Current Status April 4th, 2018

Overall assessment

Influenza continues to circulate in the Middlesex-London region at low levels. Although new cases continue to be reported, when compared to the weeks of highest activity, the current observations suggest that the influenza season may be winding down.

Analysis and Action

Local residents can take a number of other 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. Taking into consideration the two-week time frame necessary for the flu vaccine to offer optimal protection, and the current low level of activity being observed in the community, the Health Unit is no longer recommending the seasonal influenza vaccine for unimmunized individuals at this time.

Details of Current Local Activity

Between March 25th and 31st there were 16 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza A and four cases of influenza B reported to the Health Unit. There were also 13 hospitalizations reported last week, as well as one death. 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 379 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 419 hospitalizations and 40 deaths; all deaths to date have been among individuals 50 years of age and over. Over this time period, there have also been 29 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 802 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 March 25th to 31st, 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}	Mar. 25-31 (week 13) ²	Influenza A – 16 cases Influenza B – 4 cases Influenza A & B – 0 cases	Influenza A – 379 cases Influenza B – 417 cases Influenza A & B – 6 cases	Influenza A: Higher than the previous week (Mar. 18-24) when 15 cases were reported. Influenza B: Lower than the previous week (Mar. 18-24) when nine cases were reported.
Influenza sub-types¹	Mar. 25-31	Influenza A (H3) – 3 cases Influenza A not yet subtyped – 13 cases Influenza B not yet subtyped – 4 cases	Influenza A – (H3) – 68 cases (H1N1)pdm09 – 2 cases Not subtyped – 309 cases Influenza B – Phuket/3073/13-like – 1 case Not subtyped – 416 cases	
Hospitalizations^{1,5}	Mar. 25-31	13	419	Lower than the previous week (Mar. 18-24) when 16 hospitalizations were reported.
Deaths^{1,5}	Mar. 25-31	1	40	Higher than the previous week (Mar. 18-24) when no deaths were reported.
Influenza outbreaks in long-term care homes/retirement homes/acute care	Mar. 25-31	Influenza A – 2 outbreaks Influenza B – 0 outbreaks Influenza A & B – 0 outbreaks	Influenza A – 29 outbreaks Influenza B – 29 outbreaks Influenza A&B – 7 outbreaks	Influenza A: Higher than the previous week (Mar. 18-24) when one outbreak was reported. Influenza B: Lower than the previous week (Mar. 18-24) when one outbreak was reported.
Percentage of samples that are positive for influenza (Ontario)³	Mar. 18-24 (week 12) ²	Influenza A – 11.6% positivity Influenza B – 7.4% positivity	N/A	Influenza A: Lower than 13.5% positivity reported in the previous reporting period (Mar. 11-17). Influenza B: Lower than 8.7% positivity reported in the previous reporting period (Mar. 11-17).

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

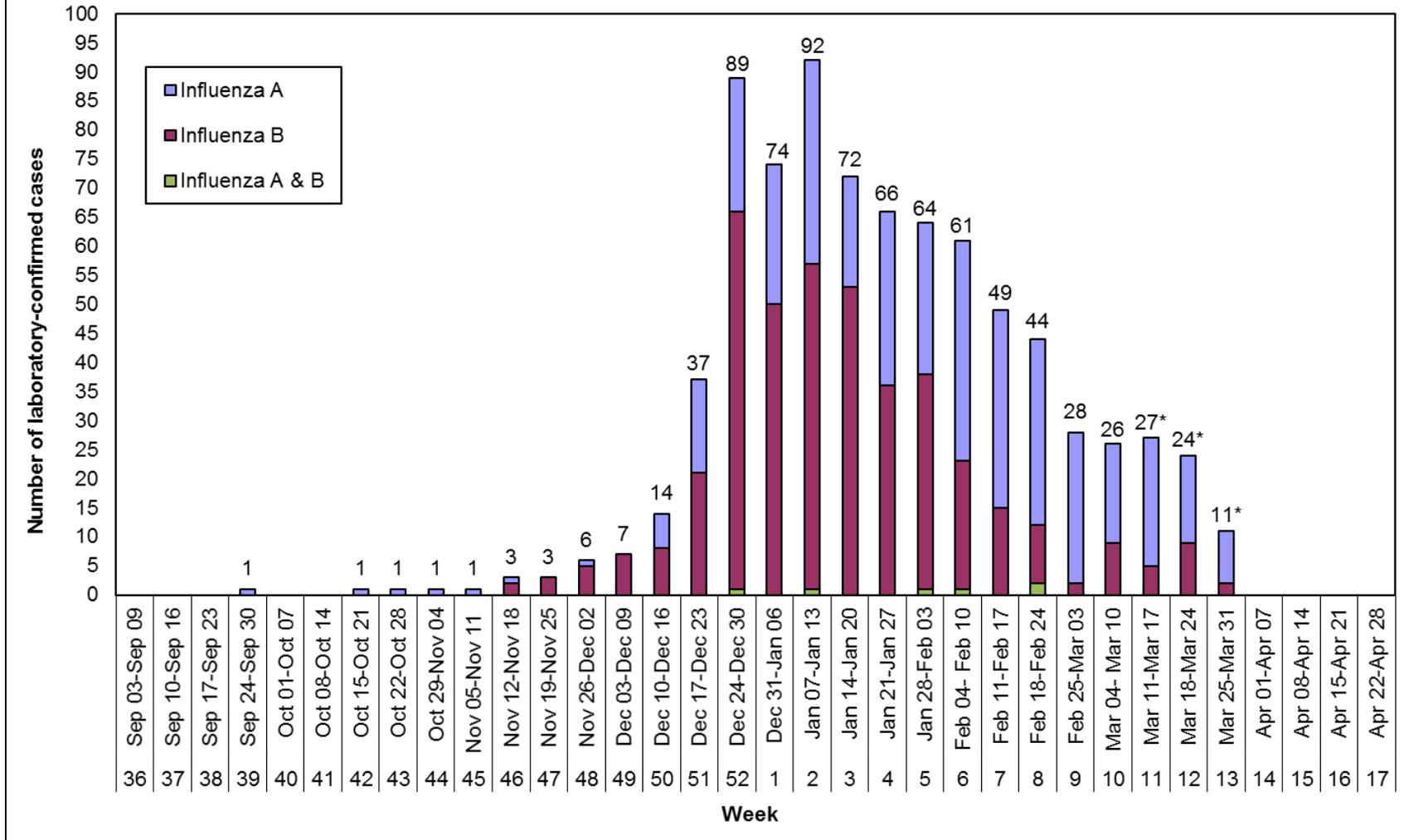
Indicator	Reporting Period	Number Reported: <i>Current Reporting Period</i>	Recent Trends
Hospital emergency room reports regarding the percentage of patients with fever and respiratory illness	Mar. 25-31	An average of 7.3% of patients presented with fever and respiratory symptoms. The proportion was highest at the pediatric emergency department, where 18.5% of patients presented with a fever and respiratory symptoms.	Lower than 8.1% reported the previous week (Mar. 18-24). Lower than 20.3% reported the previous week (Mar. 18-24).
Absence reports from elementary schools (i.e., absenteeism > 10%)	Mar. 26-30	Seventeen elementary schools from one school board reported average absenteeism (due to all causes) exceeding 10%.	Lower than the previous week (Mar. 19-23) when 18 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=802)**



Data source: Middlesex-London Health Unit internal influenza tracking database, extracted April 3, 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.