

2012-2013 Influenza Surveillance Update of Current Status and Issues

January 9, 2013

In the three weeks between December 18, 2012 and the end of day on January 7, 2013, a total of 216 new laboratory-confirmed influenza cases have been reported to the Middlesex-London Health Unit; 215 are influenza A and one is influenza B. There were 106 hospitalizations reported among these cases, as well as nine deaths. However, it should be noted that the reporting of hospitalization and deaths may be incomplete due to the large volume of cases reported and the inability of the Health Unit to follow-up all cases. A total of 21 new influenza A outbreaks were declared in long-term care settings, retirement homes, assisted living facilities and acute care hospitals, bringing the total to 30 influenza outbreaks in facilities.

As of Monday January 7, 2013, a total of 325 laboratory-confirmed influenza A cases and two influenza B cases were reported in Middlesex-London. Fifty-seven of the reported influenza A cases have been subtyped as human influenza A(H3) and one has been subtyped as influenza A(H1N1)pdm09. Influenza immunization status of the newly reported cases is unavailable at this time due to the high volume of cases to follow up.

Public Health Ontario reported that in Ontario, influenza activity continued to increase for the weeks of December 16 – 22 and December 23 – 29. This continues to be driven by influenza A activity, primarily influenza A/H3N2.

In Canada, since the beginning of September, 177 influenza viruses have been antigenically characterized. A total of 136 influenza A(H3N2) viruses were similar to A/Victoria/361/2011 and 17 A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses were similar to A/California/07/09. Twenty B viruses were similar to B/Wisconsin/01/2010 and four were similar to B/Brisbane/60/2008. The components of the 2012/2013 influenza vaccine are A/California/7/2009-like virus (an H1N1pdm09-like virus), A/Victoria/361/2011 (H3N2)-like virus, and B/Wisconsin/1/2010-like virus.

It is very important to continue to promote the influenza vaccine for your patients, residents and staff. Influenza vaccinations will continue to be available at the Health Unit's Walk-in Immunization Clinics, which take place as follows:

50 King Street, London

- Monday, Wednesday and Friday – 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
- First and third Wednesday of each month – 9:00 am to 7:00 pm

Kenwick Mall, Strathroy

- First Tuesday of each month – 3:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Influenza vaccinations are also available at some health care providers' offices and at some pharmacies. Additional information about where influenza vaccinations are offered can be found on the Health Unit website at <http://www.healthunit.com/article.aspx?ID=10920>.

Precautions to prevent the spread of influenza are provided on page 4 of this report.

Appendix A
Summary of Community Influenza Surveillance Indicators
January 9, 2013

There continues to be a very significant amount of influenza activity in Middlesex-London.

Indicator	Recent trends / data	Comments for most recent week
Hospital emergency room reports regarding the percentage of patients with fever and respiratory illness	All sites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dec 16 – 22, 2012: 13.8% • Dec 23 – 29, 2012: 18.9% • Dec 30 – Jan 5, 2013: 14.9% 	<p>In the most recent week (December 30, 2012 – January 5, 2013), an average of 14.9% of patients at London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) emergency departments and the St. Joseph's Health Care (SJHC) urgent care centre presented with a fever and respiratory symptoms. This is decreased compared to 18.9% from the previous week.</p> <p>The proportion was highest at the paediatric emergency department, where 31.1% of patients presented with a fever and respiratory symptoms. This is decreased compared to 43.1% from the previous week.</p>
	Paediatric Emergency Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dec 16 – 22, 2012: 32.0% • Dec 23 – 29, 2012: 43.1% • Dec 30 – Jan 5, 2013: 31.1% 	
	Summary High, but possibly decreasing	
Absence reports from elementary schools (i.e., absenteeism > 10%)	High, but possibly decreasing	From December 17 – 21, 13 elementary schools in the two main English public school boards reported a 4- or 5-day average absenteeism exceeding 10%. This number is lower than the previous week, when 25 elementary schools reported a 5-day average absenteeism exceeding 10%. No data is available for the two weeks over the holiday break.
Laboratory-confirmed cases	Dec 18 – 24, 2012: 56 Dec 25 – 31, 2012: 63 Jan 1 – 7, 2013: 97	<p>In the most recent week (January 1 – 7, 2013), 97 laboratory-confirmed influenza cases were reported, 96 influenza A and one influenza B. This includes 18 cases that live in residential settings.</p> <p>Since the beginning of the surveillance season on September 1, a total of 327 laboratory-confirmed influenza (325 Influenza A and two influenza B) cases have been reported to the Health Unit.</p>
	Summary High and increasing	
Hospitalizations	Dec 18 – 24, 2012: 22 Dec 25 – 31, 2012: 22 Jan 1 – 7, 2013: 62	<p>In the most recent week (January 1 – 7, 2013), 62 people with laboratory-confirmed influenza were reported to be hospitalized.</p> <p>To date, 162 people with laboratory-confirmed influenza have been hospitalized. However, it should be noted that the reporting of hospitalizations may be incomplete.</p>
	Summary High and increasing Potentially incomplete	
Deaths	Dec 18 – 24, 2012: 4 Dec 25 – 31, 2012: 3 Jan 1 – 7, 2013: 2	<p>Since the previous report, nine deaths were newly reported among cases with laboratory confirmed influenza.</p> <p>To date, twelve deaths have been reported among cases with laboratory-confirmed influenza. However, it should be noted that the reporting of deaths may be incomplete.</p>
	Summary Potentially incomplete	

Indicator	Recent trends / data	Comments for most recent week
Influenza outbreaks in long-term care homes/retirement homes/acute care	<p>Dec 18 – 24, 2012: 7 Dec 25 – 31, 2012: 3 Jan 1 – 7, 2013: 11</p> <hr/> <p>Summary High and increasing</p>	<p>In the most recent week (January 1 – 7, 2013), 11 new influenza A outbreaks were declared; seven in long-term care settings, two in retirement homes, and two in acute care hospitals.</p> <p>To date, 30 influenza A outbreaks have been reported, 26 in long-term care/retirement homes/assisted living facilities and four in acute care hospitals.</p>
Sentinel X-ray provider reports regarding newly identified bronchopneumonia cases	<p>Dec 17 – 22, 2012: 4.98% Dec 24 – 29, 2012: 9.91% Dec 31 - Jan 5, 2013: 10.21%</p> <hr/> <p>Summary Increasing</p>	<p>In the most recent week (December 31, 2012 – January 5, 2013), 10.21% of chest x-rays performed by the sentinel x-ray provider were newly diagnosed bronchopneumonia cases. This is increased compared to 9.91% from the previous week.</p>
Percentage of Ontario laboratory samples that are positive for influenza	<p>High and increasing for influenza A</p>	<p>In Ontario, from December 23 – 29, 801 of 2,401 tests were positive for influenza A (33.4% positivity) and 20 of 2,401 tests were positive for influenza B (0.8% positivity). Compared to December 16 – 22 when the percent positivity for influenza A was 15.4%, this represents an increase of 18.0% in percent positivity.</p> <p>Influenza A had the highest percent positivity among all circulating respiratory viruses, followed by Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), at 9.4% positivity.</p>

Measures to Prevent the Spread of Influenza and other Seasonal Viruses, Including Norovirus

- Get vaccinated against influenza – it is not too late to get your flu shot.
- Stay home if you are sick. Individuals who work as food handlers, health care providers or child care workers who have diarrhea and/or vomiting should stay at home until at least 48 hours have passed from their last episode of diarrhea or vomiting.
- Clean hands frequently using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers should contain 70-90% alcohol. Hands should be cleaned after using the washroom, after changing diapers, after shaking hands and before preparing and eating food.
- If you have diarrhea or vomiting, do not prepare food for others for at least 48 hours after the last episode.
- Clean frequently-touched surfaces often. When cleaning up vomit or diarrhea, thoroughly clean the area with detergent and water, removing all debris, then disinfect with a 1:50 bleach solution if the object being cleaned will tolerate it. Discard or wash all clean-up materials then wash hands thoroughly.