

2011-2012 Influenza Surveillance Update of Current Status and Issues

January 20, 2012

Influenza activity in Middlesex-London:

Since the last report, one case of human influenza A (H3) and the first influenza B case were reported to the Middlesex-London Health Unit. To date, there have been seven influenza A cases and one influenza B case identified in Middlesex-London for the 2011-2012 influenza surveillance season. Five of the influenza A samples have been typed as human influenza A (H3). There continues to be no outbreaks of influenza in long-term care homes or in acute care facilities. The overall proportion of patients presenting to emergency departments and urgent care with febrile illness has decreased compared to the previous week, and school absenteeism is low. Based on the available information, influenza activity in Middlesex-London continues to remain low.

Provincial and National Influenza Activity:

Influenza: To date, influenza activity across the province continues to increase but has been lower than previous years. According to the latest Ontario Influenza Bulletin, there were 33 cases reported between January 8 and 14, 2012. A total of 111 influenza cases have been reported to the province for the 2011-2012 surveillance season. The majority of influenza cases reported to date were subtyped as influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 (formerly known as influenza A pH1N1) (29 cases) or influenza B (42 cases), which together account for 64.0% (71/111) of cases reported to date. Nationally, influenza activity is increasing in many regions, but remains low in the Territories, the northern parts of Ontario and Quebec, and the Atlantic region.

To date, strain characterization of influenza isolates in Ontario and Canada has demonstrated a generally good match with this season's influenza vaccine. Since the start of the season, the National Microbiology Lab has characterized 89 samples from across Canada with the following results: 35 Influenza A (H3N2)/Perth/16/2009-like and 19 Influenza A/California/07/2009, both of which are components of the 2011-2012 influenza vaccine; 14 influenza B strains are antigenically related to the strain B/Brisbane/60/2008, which also is a component of the 2011-2012 influenza vaccine; and the other 21 influenza B viruses are antigenically related to B/Wisconsin/01/2010-like, which belongs to a different lineage than the influenza strain B that is in this year's vaccine.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus: Provincially, the main virus being identified is Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) with 64 positive results of 172 samples tested by the Ontario Public Health Laboratory, for a positivity rate of 37%.

Influenza vaccinations rates:

Influenza vaccination rates for residents and staff were collected from long term care homes, retirement homes and acute care hospitals as of November 15, 2011. Twenty-eight out of 41 sites classified as retirement or nursing homes and six out of six sites classified as hospitals reported influenza immunization rates to the Health Unit.

In Middlesex-London, the immunization rates of residents in long term care homes and retirement homes ranged from 75% to 100%. On average, 92% of all residents in these facilities have been vaccinated against influenza.

For staff of long term care homes and retirement homes, the rates per facility ranged from 7% to 100%. On average, 55% of staff members working at these facilities have been vaccinated against influenza. This compares to 52% last year.

Staff vaccination rates at the six facilities in Middlesex-London classified as hospitals ranged from 35% to 61%. On average, 42% of all staff members working at hospitals have been vaccinated against influenza. This compares to 35% last year.

It is strongly recommended that health care providers who have not yet been vaccinated receive their influenza vaccine. This will help prevent transmission from staff members who are caring for patients admitted with influenza.

Influenza vaccination opportunities:

Influenza vaccination is available at some health care providers' offices and at the Health Unit's walk-in Immunization clinics. Clinics are scheduled at 50 King Street in London on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and on the first and third Wednesday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.. Clinics also take place at the Kenwick Mall in Strathroy from 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month.

Appendix A Summary of Community Influenza Surveillance Indicators

Influenza activity in Middlesex London continues to remain low.

Indicator	Recent trends / data	Comments
Hospital emergency room reports regarding the percentage of patients with fever and respiratory illness	Decreased	<p>From January 8 to 14, an average of 4.8% 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 value is lower than 7.2% from the previous week.</p> <p>The proportion was highest at the paediatric emergency department, where 13.5% of patients presented with a fever and respiratory symptoms. This value is lower than 19.9% from the previous week.</p>
Absence reports from schools (i.e., absenteeism > 10%)	Low	From January 9 to 13, none of the elementary schools in one of the two main English public school boards reported a 5-day average absenteeism exceeding 10%.
Laboratory-confirmed cases	Similar	<p>One new case of human influenza A (H3) and one influenza B case have been reported to the Health Unit since the last report.</p> <p>Since the beginning of the influenza surveillance season, seven influenza As and one influenza B have been reported in Middlesex-London. Five of the influenza A strains have been characterized as H3.</p>
Hospitalizations	Similar	<p>No hospitalizations of cases with lab confirmed influenza were reported this week.</p> <p>To date, five people with laboratory-confirmed influenza have been hospitalized since the start of the influenza surveillance season.</p>
Deaths	None reported	
Long-term care facility outbreaks	None reported	Since the beginning of the influenza surveillance season, no institutional outbreaks of influenza have been reported to the Health Unit.
Sentinel X-ray provider reports regarding newly identified bronchopneumonia cases	Similar	From January 9 to 14, 2.9% of chest x-rays performed by the sentinel x-ray provider were newly diagnosed bronchopneumonia cases. This proportion is comparable to 2.5% from the previous week.
Calls to Telehealth Ontario related to respiratory and influenza-like illness	None reported	
Percentage of influenza tests performed by the Ontario Public Health Laboratory that are positive from across the province	Low, but slightly increased from previous week	Based on provincial testing done by the Ontario Public Health Laboratory from January 8 to 14, 8 of 426 samples tested positive for influenza A for a positivity rate of 1.9%, and 9 of 422 samples tested positive for influenza B for a positivity rate of 2.1%.