

2011-2012 Influenza Surveillance Update of Current Status and Issues

February 6, 2012

Influenza activity in Middlesex-London:

Since the last report, one new case of influenza A was reported to the Middlesex-London Health Unit. To date, there have been eight 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). One of these samples has been strain typed as A/Perth/16/2009-like (H3N2) which is the H3N2 component for this year's influenza vaccine.

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 London emergency departments and urgent care with fever and respiratory symptoms is slightly increased compared to the previous week, and school absenteeism has increased as well. Based on the available information, influenza activity in Middlesex London remains low, but may be showing signs of increase.

Provincial and National Influenza Activity:

Influenza: To date, influenza activity across the province is similar to the previous week and remains low. According to the latest Ontario Influenza Bulletin, there were 38 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza reported between January 22 and 28, 2012. In total, 191 influenza cases have been reported to the province for the 2011-2012 surveillance season. The majority of the influenza cases reported were subtyped as influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 (formerly known as influenza A pH1N1) (55 cases) or influenza B (72 cases), which together account for 66.5% (127/191) of cases reported to date. Provincially, five new respiratory outbreaks (3 influenza A and 2 influenza B) were reported this reporting week. In total seven, institutional influenza outbreaks have been reported this season. Nationally, influenza activity has increased in more regions compared to the previous week. The number of influenza B detections has been increasing nationally over time. Ontario, Newfoundland and Quebec are noted as having the highest proportion of influenza B detections compared to influenza A detections.

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 150 samples from across Canada with the following results: 47 Influenza A (H3N2)/Perth/16/2009-like and 37 Influenza A/California/07/2009, both of which are components of the 2011-2012 influenza vaccine; 40 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 26 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.

Other Respiratory Pathogens: Provincially and nationally, the main virus being identified is Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). In Ontario, there were 43 positive results of 121 samples tested by the Ontario Public Health Laboratory, for a positivity rate of 35.5%. Nationally, the percent positivity for RSV is 17%, making it among the most prevalent of the other non-influenza respiratory viruses being detected in the country.

Detections of Coronavirus have also increased this reporting week. In Ontario, there were 12 positive results out of 63 samples, for a positivity rate of 19.0%, which is 4.5% higher than the previous week.

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, but may be showing signs of increase.

Indicator	Recent trends / data	Comments
Hospital emergency room reports regarding the percentage of patients with fever and respiratory illness	Slightly increased	From January 29 to February 4, an average of 6.9% 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 value is slightly higher compared to 6.2% from the previous week. The proportion was highest at the paediatric emergency department, where 18.9% of patients presented with a fever and respiratory symptoms. This value is comparable to 18.6% from the previous week.
Absence reports from schools (i.e., absenteeism > 10%)	Increased	From January 23 to 27, four elementary schools in the two main English language public school boards reported a 5-day average absenteeism exceeding 10%.
Laboratory-confirmed cases	Low	One case of influenza A has been reported to the Health Unit this week. Since the beginning of the influenza surveillance season, eight influenza As and one influenza B have been reported in Middlesex-London. Five of the influenza A strains have been characterized as H3 of which one was strain typed as A/Perth/16/2009-like (H3N2), a component of this year's seasonal influenza vaccine.
Hospitalizations	Low	One hospitalization of a case with laboratory confirmed influenza was reported this week. To date, six people with laboratory-confirmed influenza have been hospitalized since the start of the influenza surveillance season.
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	Increased	From January 30 to February 4, 5.4% of chest x-rays performed by the sentinel x-ray provider were newly diagnosed bronchopneumonia cases. This proportion is higher than 4.3% 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	Slightly higher	Based on provincial testing done by the Ontario Public Health Laboratory from January 22 to 28, 10 of 365 samples tested positive for influenza A for a positivity rate of 2.7% compared to 1.5% the previous week. Nine of 364 samples tested positive for influenza B for a positivity rate of 2.5% compared to 1.8% the previous week.