

2011-2012 Influenza Surveillance Update of Current Status and Issues

February 13, 2012

Influenza activity in Middlesex-London:

Since the last report, two cases of influenza were reported to the Middlesex London Health Unit, one typed as human influenza A(H3) and one typed as influenza B. To date, there have been nine influenza A cases and two influenza B case identified in Middlesex London for the 2011-2012 influenza surveillance season. Six 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 increased compared to the previous week, and school absenteeism was comparable to the previous week. 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: Influenza activity across the province is higher this week than compared to the previous week, but continues to be lower than in previous years. According to the latest Ontario Influenza Bulletin, there were 60 laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza reported between January 29 and February 4, 2012. In total, 253 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 B (111 cases) or influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 (formerly known as influenza A pH1N1) (62 cases), which together account for 68.4% (173/253) of cases reported to date. Provincially, nine new institutional respiratory outbreaks were reported this week, two of which were identified as influenza A. In total, nine institutional influenza outbreaks have been reported this season. Nationally, influenza activity continues to increase. The percent of positive influenza B detections has been increasing nationally over the past several weeks. To date, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador have had the highest proportion of influenza B detections relative 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 179 samples from across Canada with the following results: 50 Influenza A (H3N2)/Perth/16/2009-like and 43 Influenza A/California/07/2009, both of which are components of the 2011-2012 influenza vaccine; 50 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 36 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 respiratory virus being identified is Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). In Ontario, this week there were 60 positive results of 145 samples tested by the Ontario Public Health Laboratory, for a positivity rate of 41.4%. Nationally, the percent positivity for RSV is 18.2%, making it 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 19 positive results out of 75 samples tested by the Ontario Public Health Laboratory, for a positivity rate of 25.3%, which is 6.3% 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 is 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	Higher	From February 5 to 11, an average of 7.9% 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 higher compared to 6.9% from the previous week. The proportion was highest at the paediatric emergency department, where 22.0% of patients presented with a fever and respiratory symptoms. This value is higher compared to 18.9% from the previous week.
Absence reports from schools (i.e., absenteeism > 10%)	Similar	From January 30 to February 4, four elementary schools in the two main English language public school boards reported a 5-day average absenteeism exceeding 10%. This is the same number as the previous week.
Laboratory-confirmed cases	Low	Two cases of influenza were reported to the Health Unit this week (one influenza A(H3) and one influenza B) Since the beginning of the influenza surveillance season, nine influenza A and two influenza B cases have been reported in Middlesex-London. Six 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	No hospitalization of a case with laboratory confirmed influenza was reported this week. Since the start of the influenza surveillance season, six people with laboratory-confirmed influenza have been hospitalized.
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	Lower	From February 6 to 11, 4.1% of chest x-rays performed by the sentinel x-ray provider were newly diagnosed bronchopneumonia cases. This proportion is lower than 5.4% from the previous week.
Calls to Telehealth Ontario related to respiratory and influenza-like illness	Higher	Between February 6 and 10 the Health Unit was notified that the number of Telehealth calls related to respiratory symptoms exceeded expected norms for the Middlesex-London area.
Percentage of influenza tests performed by the Ontario Public Health Laboratory that are positive from across the province	Higher	Based on provincial testing done by the Ontario Public Health Laboratory from January 29 to February 4, 2012, 12 of 348 samples tested positive for influenza A for a positivity rate of 3.4% compared to 2.7% the previous week. Twenty two of 347 samples tested positive for influenza B for a positivity rate of 6.3% which is higher than 2.5% positivity the previous week.