

Influenza Surveillance 2015–2016

Week 8 (Feb.21–27, 2016)

Data extracted Mar. 4, 2016 at 11:00 am

Laboratory-confirmed influenza cases this week:

- **80** cases of influenza A ↑
- **2** case of influenza B →
- **16.7%** positivity ↑

Since Sept. 1, 2015:

- **220** cases of influenza A
- **13** case of influenza B

Laboratory

Cases and cumulative incidence rates (cases per 100,000 population) since Sept. 1, 2015:

- **Winnipeg: 65 (9.5)**
- **Southern: 29 (18.3)**
- **Interlake-Eastern: 23 (18.2)**
- **Prairie Mountain: 50 (30.4)**
- **Northern: 53 (70.3)**

Regional Health Authority

Severe outcomes associated with laboratory-confirmed influenza diagnosis in this week:

- **21** hospitalizations ↑
- **7** ICU admission ↑
- **2** deaths ↑

Since Sept. 1, 2015:

- **56** hospitalizations
- **16** ICU admissions
- **2** deaths

Severity

Calls to Influenza Service at Health Links–Info Santé this week: **15** ↓

Percent of visits to sentinel physicians due to ILI this week: **2.4%** ↑

In Emergency Department this week:

- **193** ILI cases per day on average ↑
- **19–25%** of visits due to ILI →

Influenza-Like-Illness (ILI)

Laboratory-confirmed outbreaks this week:

- **2** outbreaks of influenza A ↑
- **0** outbreaks of influenza B →

Since Sept. 1, 2015:

- **5** outbreaks of influenza A
- **0** outbreaks of influenza B

Outbreak

Oseltamivir dispensed from community retail pharmacies:

- This week: **150** units ↑
- Since Oct. 1, 2015: **658** units

Isolates resistant to antiviral since Sept. 1, 2015 in Manitoba:

- **Oseltamivir: 1**
- **Zanamivir: 0**

Antiviral

As of Jan. 31, 2016:

- **Percent of Manitobans immunized with the seasonal influenza vaccine: 22%**

Please note:

- FluMist® Quadrivalent (AstraZeneca) vaccines expired and are not available any more this season.
- Fluzone® Quadrivalent (Sanofi Pasteur) vaccines are still available.

The quadrivalent influenza vaccine, that is available in Manitoba, protects people from four influenza strains that appear to be circulating.

Immunization

This week, there was a large increase in the influenza associated hospital and ICU admissions and two influenza patients below 65 years of age deceased. ILI activity in Emergency Departments remained high, similar to last week. Incidence rate continued to be higher among young children below 5. They accounted for one third of all hospitalized influenza patients.

Nationally, influenza A(H1N1) remains the most common influenza subtype circulating in Canada. This week, influenza confirmations increased slightly with greater geographic spread. In British Columbia and Alberta, the laboratory detections of respiratory viruses including influenza decreased this week. However, in Ontario and Quebec, there was a large increase from the previous week, mostly due to detections of influenza A.

Influenza activity in the United States also increased this week and four influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported. On February 25, 2016, the WHO announced its recommended components for the 2016–2017 northern hemisphere influenza vaccine.

Summary: Increasing activity

Note. Numbers are subject to change. Missed events in the current weekly report due to a delay of submission to MHLS will be reported in later weeks when data become available.

Laboratory Surveillance

Reports of influenza nucleic acid detection, culture isolation, and enzyme immunoassay (EIA) detections are received from Cadham Provincial Laboratory (CPL) and occasionally other laboratories. These reports are forwarded to Epidemiology and Surveillance (E&S) within 24 hours of confirmation. CPL also performs testing for other respiratory viruses including parainfluenza, RSV, adenovirus, rhinovirus, coronavirus, enterovirus, and bocavirus, which are reported to E&S on a weekly basis.

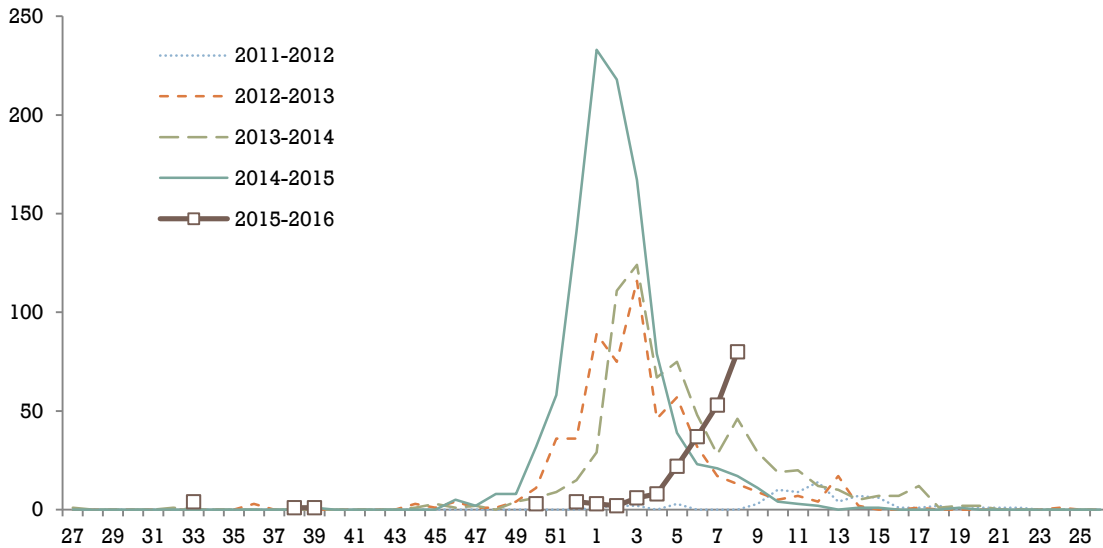


Figure 1. Laboratory-confirmed influenza A cases by week, Manitoba, 2015–2016

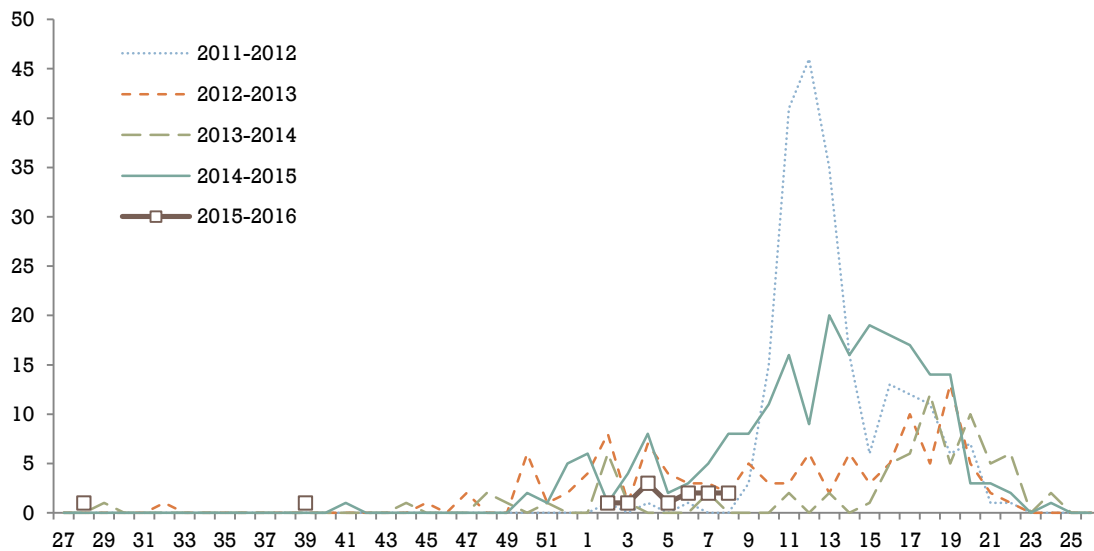


Figure 2. Laboratory-confirmed influenza B cases by week, Manitoba, 2015–2016

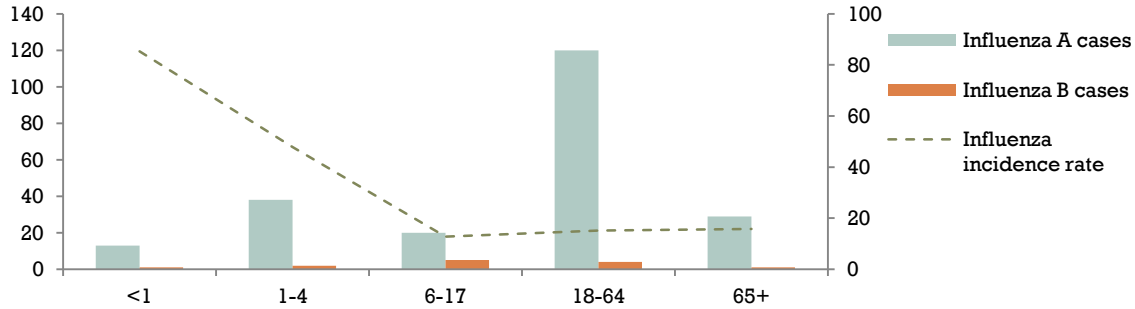


Figure 3. Influenza A and B cases by age group, Manitoba, 2015–2016

Health Links – Info Santé

Health Links–Info Santé is a 24-hour, 7-days a week telephone information service. It is staffed by registered nurses with the knowledge to provide answers to health care questions and guidance to appropriate care over the phone. When a caller phones Health Links–Info Santé and selects Influenza Service, they are given an option to select information on (1) the groups of individuals who are at an increased risk of serious illness, (2) how to arrange an influenza vaccine, (3) the annual influenza immunization campaign, or (4) the management of influenza and its potential complications.

The number of calls to Health Links – Info Santé continued to be low. Overall, there were fewer calls in 2015–2016 than in previous seasons.

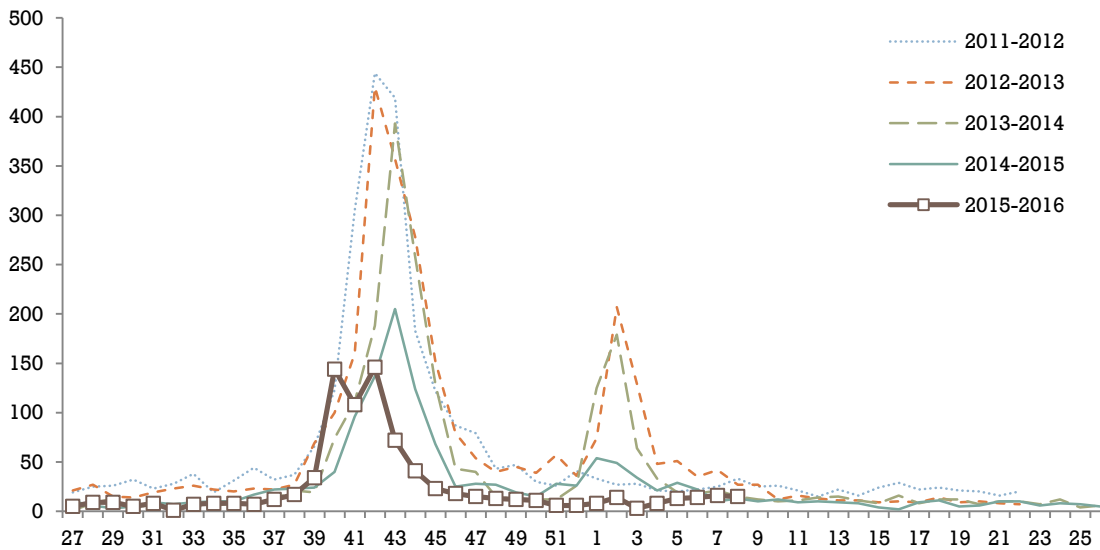


Figure 4. Calls to Health Links – Info Santé, Manitoba, 2015–2016

ILI

ILI visits to sentinel physicians

Manitoba participates in *FluWatch*, the Canada’s national surveillance system co-ordinated by Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), which monitors the spread of influenza and ILI on a year-round basis. *FluWatch* consists of a network of laboratories, hospitals, doctor’s offices and provincial and territorial ministries of health. In 2015–2016, there were 19 sentinel physicians recruited throughout Manitoba. They are requested to report to *FluWatch* weekly. E&S receives weekly reports from *FluWatch* which present the ILI rate for Manitoba and for

each of the participating sentinel physicians. Note that the reporting sentinel physicians are different by week and their reports may not be representative of ILI activity across the province.

The weekly percentage of patient visits to sentinel physicians due to ILI this season continued to be low.

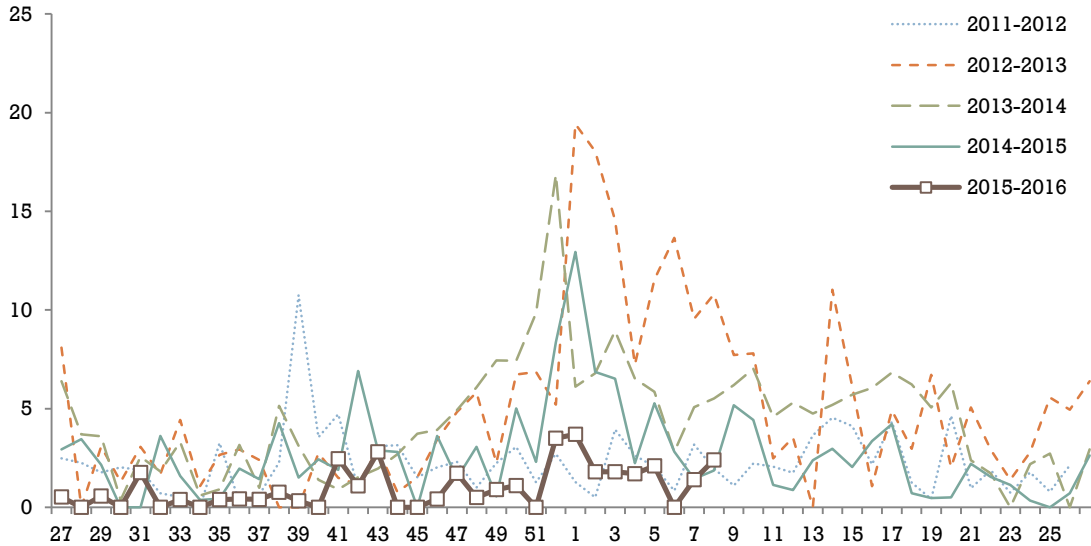


Figure 5 Percent of patient visits to sentinel physicians due to ILI by week, Manitoba, 2015–2016

ILI visits to Emergency Rooms

E&S receives the summary report for the daily ILI related visits to Emergency Department at Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) on a weekly basis. ILI cases are defined as patients whose triage chief complaints contain either of these symptoms: weakness, shortness of breath, cough, headache, fever, cardiac/respiratory arrest, sore throat, and upper respiratory tract infection complaints.

The number of ILI cases and as % of total visits in Emergency Department this week remained high, similar to the previous week.

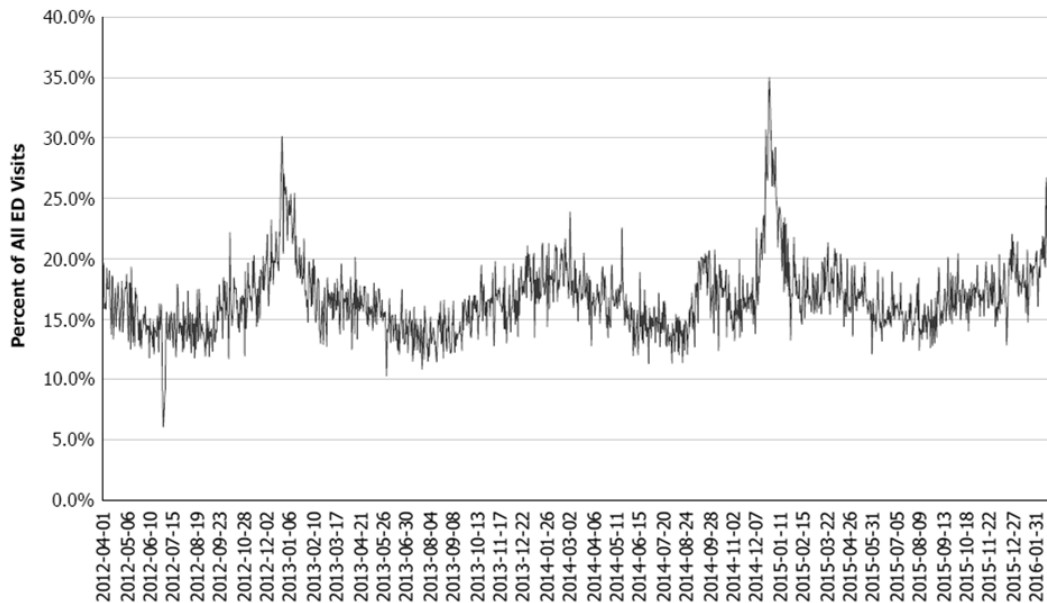


Figure 6 ILI cases as % of all visits in Emergency Department at WRHA, Manitoba

Influenza Associated Severe Outcome

Each influenza season, RHAs are asked to submit a line list of influenza associated hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths to E&S at MHLS on a weekly basis, which includes the lab requisition number, age, reporting RHA, and type/subtype of influenza. Aggregate numbers of hospitalizations, ICU admissions and deaths are also reported to PHAC for national surveillance on a weekly basis. The reason for hospitalization, ICU admission, or death does not have to be attributable to influenza. Instead, a temporal association with a positive influenza laboratory result is sufficient for reporting. Influenza associated deaths may also be reported from other sources.

Most hospitalized influenza patients this season were aged below 65 years. Specifically, one third of patients were aged below 5 years. Seniors over 65 accounted for 20%.

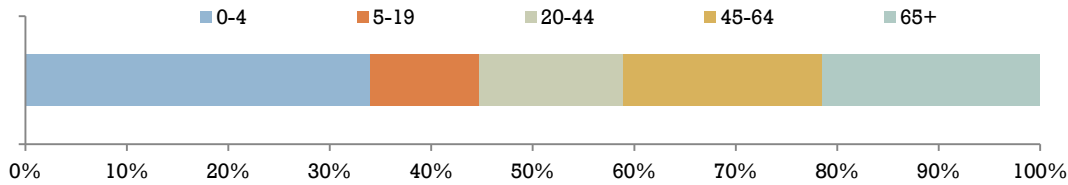


Figure 7 Percentage of hospitalized influenza patients by age, Manitoba, 2015-2016

Antiviral Dispensing

Daily units of antiviral drug, Oseltamivir (Tamiflu®), dispensed to Manitoba residents during an influenza season are reported to E&S from Drug Programs Information Network (DPIN) on a weekly basis since October 1 each season. Only drugs dispensed from community retail pharmacies are included in this report. Antiviral drugs dispensed to in-patients or through nursing stations could not be included due to lack of data.

The units of antiviral drug dispensed this week increased significantly from the previous week.

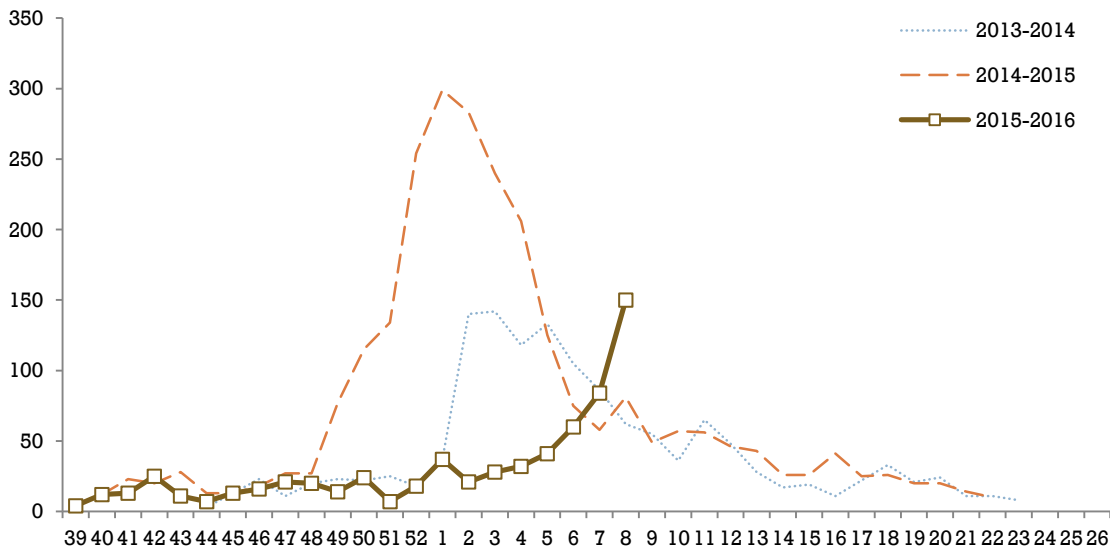


Figure 8 Units of Oseltamivir dispensed by week, Manitoba, 2015-2016

Antiviral Resistance

Influenza and Respiratory Viruses Section of National Microbiology Laboratory (NML) undertakes enhanced surveillance, investigations, and research on influenza and other respiratory pathogens. A random sample of positive influenza specimens isolated by culture is referred from each provincial laboratory to NML for strain

characterization and antiviral resistance testing. The aggregate level information is then shared with provinces and territories on a weekly basis.

To date, all influenza viruses tested except one were sensitive to Oseltamivir and all were sensitive to Zanamivir. In comparison, almost all viruses tested were resistant to Amantadine.

Table 1. Antiviral resistance of isolates by influenza type and subtype since September 1, 2015 in Canada and Manitoba, 2015–2016

		Oseltamivir		Zanamivir		Amantadine	
		# Resistant	# Sensitive	# Resistant	# Sensitive	# Resistant	# Sensitive
Canada	A(H3N2)	0	120	0	123	130	1
	A(H1N1)	1	253	0	283	287	0
	B	0	126	0	141	N/A	N/A
Manitoba	A(H3N2)	0	0	0	0	0	0
	A(H1N1)	0	5	0	5	5	0
	B	0	2	0	2	N/A	N/A

N/A = Not applicable

Immunization

As per World Health Organization (WHO), all seasonal quadrivalent influenza vaccines for 2015–2016 in the northern hemisphere contain:

- A/Switzerland/9715293/2013(H3N2)-like virus;
- A/California/7/2009(H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus.
- B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus.

For the 2015–2016 influenza season, MHLS is allotted quadrivalent inactivated vaccine (QIV), Fluzone® Quadrivalent (Sanofi Pasteur), and quadrivalent live attenuated influenza vaccine (QLAIV) FluMist® Quadrivalent (AstraZeneca), as part of the province's Publicly-Funded Seasonal Influenza Immunization Program.

Circulating Strain

NML antigenically characterizes influenza viruses received from Canadian laboratories year-round. In Manitoba, a random sample of positive influenza specimens isolated by culture is referred from CPL to NML.

Since September 1, 2015, NML has characterized 588 influenza A and B viruses.

1. 129 influenza A(H3N2) viruses:

- 28 influenza A(H3N2) viruses were antigenically characterized as A/Switzerland/9715293/2013, the influenza A(H3N2) component in the 2015–2016 influenza vaccine.
- 101 influenza A(H3N2) viruses did not grow to sufficient hemagglutination titers for antigenic characterization by hemagglutination inhibition assays. Therefore, genetic characterization was performed. Sequence analyses showed that those influenza A(H3N2) viruses belonged to a genetic group in which most viruses were antigenically related to A/Switzerland/9715293/2013.

2. 307 influenza A(H1N1) viruses:

- 307 influenza A(H1N1) viruses characterized were antigenically similar to A/California/7/2009, the influenza A(H1N1) component in the vaccine.

3. 152 influenza B viruses:

- 53 influenza B viruses characterized were antigenically similar to B/Phuket/3073/2013 (Yamagata lineage), the influenza B component in the vaccine.
- 99 influenza B viruses were characterized as B/Brisbane/60/2008-like (Victoria lineage), the influenza B component in the quadrivalent vaccine.

Table 2 Influenza Strain Characterization reported by NML since September 1, 2015, Canada, 2015–2016

Strain	Number of viruses	
	Canada	Manitoba
A/Switzerland/9715293/2013(H3N2)-like	28	0
A/California/7/2009(H1N1)-like	307	5
B/Phuket/3073/2013-like	53	1
B/Brisbane/60/2008-like	99	2

Abbreviations

CPL = Cadham Provincial Laboratory
E&S = Epidemiology and Surveillance
ICU = Intensive Care Unit
ILI = Influenza Like Illness
LTCF = Long Term Care Facility
MHLS = Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors
NML = National Microbiology Laboratory
PHAC = Public Health Agency of Canada
RHA = Regional Health Authority
WHO = World Health Organization
WRHA = Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

Explanatory Notes and Definitions

Cumulative data

Cumulative data include updates to previous weeks. Due to reporting delays or amendments, the sum of weekly report totals may not add up to cumulative totals.

Data extraction date

Manitoba-specific information contained within this update is based on data confirmed in SIS databases at 11:00 am on the date of data extraction.

Epidemiology week

Time trends in this report were analyzed by [epidemiology week](#), a schedule used by the national FluWatch program coordinated by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

Incidence rate

Incidence rate measures the frequency with which influenza occurs in a region. It is calculated as the total number of new cases this influenza season multiplied by 10,000 and divided by the total population in each region. Regional populations as of June 1, 2014 are provided by Information Management & Analytics at MHLS.

ILI in the general population

Acute onset of respiratory illness with fever and cough and with one or more of the following – sore throat, arthralgia, myalgia, or prostration, which is likely due to influenza. In children under 5, gastrointestinal symptoms may also be present. In patients under 5 or 65 and older, fever may not be prominent.

ILI outbreaks

Schools: Greater than 10% absenteeism (or absenteeism that is higher (e.g. >5-10%) than expected level as determined by school or public health authority) which is likely due to ILI.

Hospitals and residential institutions: Two or more cases of ILI within a seven-day period, including at least one laboratory confirmed case.

Other settings: Two or more cases of ILI within a seven-day period, including at least one laboratory confirmed case; i.e. workplace, closed communities.

Specimen collection date

The date the laboratory specimen was taken is used to assign cases to the appropriate week in this report. However, hospitalized/ICU cases are reported based on laboratory report date.

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For other Epidemiology and Surveillance reports, please view the Manitoba Health internet website:
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/surveillance/index.html>

For national surveillance data, refer to:
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/index-eng.php>