



Whatcom County 2017-18 Influenza Report

Weeks 42-43, October 15-28, 2017

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Summary

During weeks 42-43 there were 3 positive influenza A tests, and 2 positive influenza B tests, reported by Quest Diagnostics at PeaceHealth. There were at least two lab confirmed, influenza-related hospitalizations. No deaths related to influenza were reported. Emergency room visits for respiratory complaints were slightly higher than expected at the beginning of week 42. There were no new influenza outbreaks reported by long term care facilities in Whatcom County. Twenty-six schools in Whatcom County reported elevated absenteeism rates during week 42, and twenty-four schools during week 43. The outpatient sentinel clinics reported two ILI (influenza-like-illness) visits.

There have been 0 lab confirmed, influenza-related deaths in Whatcom County to date this flu season.

Laboratory Data

The total number of influenza A and Influenza B tests and the percentage positive is an indicator of influenza activity in the community. Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) testing provides an indicator of other causes of viral respiratory illness in the community. The following information is from Quest Diagnostics at PeaceHealth.

CDC Week	38	39	40	41	42	43
End date	9/23/2017	9/30/2017	10/7/2017	10/14/2017	10/21/2017	10/28/2017
Influenza						
Total tests	22	35	41	35	59	59
N(%) Positive A	1(4.5%)	1(2.9%)	2(4.9%)	No Data	2(3.4%)	1(1.7%)
N(%) Positive B	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	No Data	0(0%)	2(3.4%)
RSV						
Total tests	2	4	1	4	11	1
N(%) Positive	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	No Data	0(0%)	0(0%)

Syndromic Surveillance Data

The Whatcom County Health Department monitors emergency department visits at PeaceHealth St. Joseph Medical Center for respiratory complaints through the National Syndromic Surveillance Program. The number of people presenting with respiratory complaints at the emergency department was slightly higher than expected at the beginning of 42.

Nursing Homes

Influenza reporting requirements include outbreaks of influenza-like-illness in institutional settings such as long term care facilities. Because some elderly people with influenza may not have a prominent fever, outbreaks are defined as either more acute febrile respiratory illnesses (>2 cases within 72 hours of each other) within the facility, or any resident testing positive for influenza. There were no new influenza outbreaks reported by long term care facilities in Whatcom County during weeks 42-43.

School Absenteeism

School absenteeism is an indirect measure of influenza activity. Absenteeism increases during influenza season and during outbreaks, but may be due to causes other than influenza. All seven Whatcom County school districts have voluntarily participated in reporting daily absenteeism rates to the Washington State Department of Health. Twenty-six schools (out of fifty-four schools reporting) in Whatcom County reported at least one day during week 42, and twenty-four schools during week 43, on which their absenteeism rate exceeded 10%.

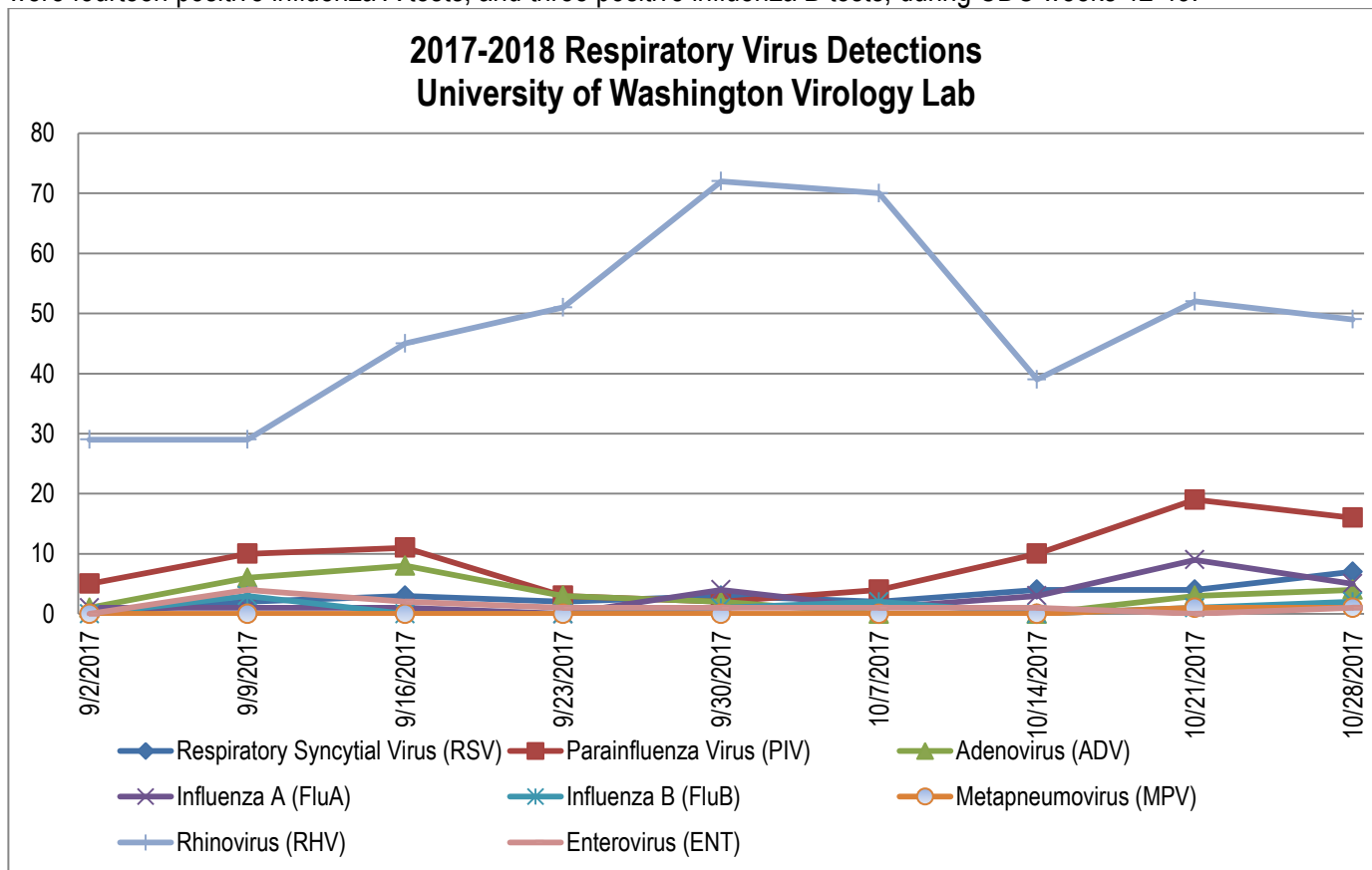
Outpatient Clinic Visits

Two Whatcom County medical practices are CDC Sentinel Influenza Surveillance sites and report weekly the number of patients seen and number of those with influenza-like-illness (ILI). ILI is defined as fever 100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C (oral or equivalent) or higher AND cough and/or sore throat [in the absence of a known cause other than influenza].

	CDC Week	40	41	42	43		
End date		10/7/2017	10/14/2017	10/21/2017	10/28/2017		
Clinic A							
	Total visits	292	284	443	404		
	% ILI	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(0.5%)	0(0%)		
Clinic B							
	Total visits	37	30	28	38		
	% ILI	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)		

University of Washington

According to the University of Washington's most recent Virology Laboratory Respiratory Virus Detection report, there were fourteen positive influenza A tests, and three positive influenza B tests, during CDC weeks 42-43.

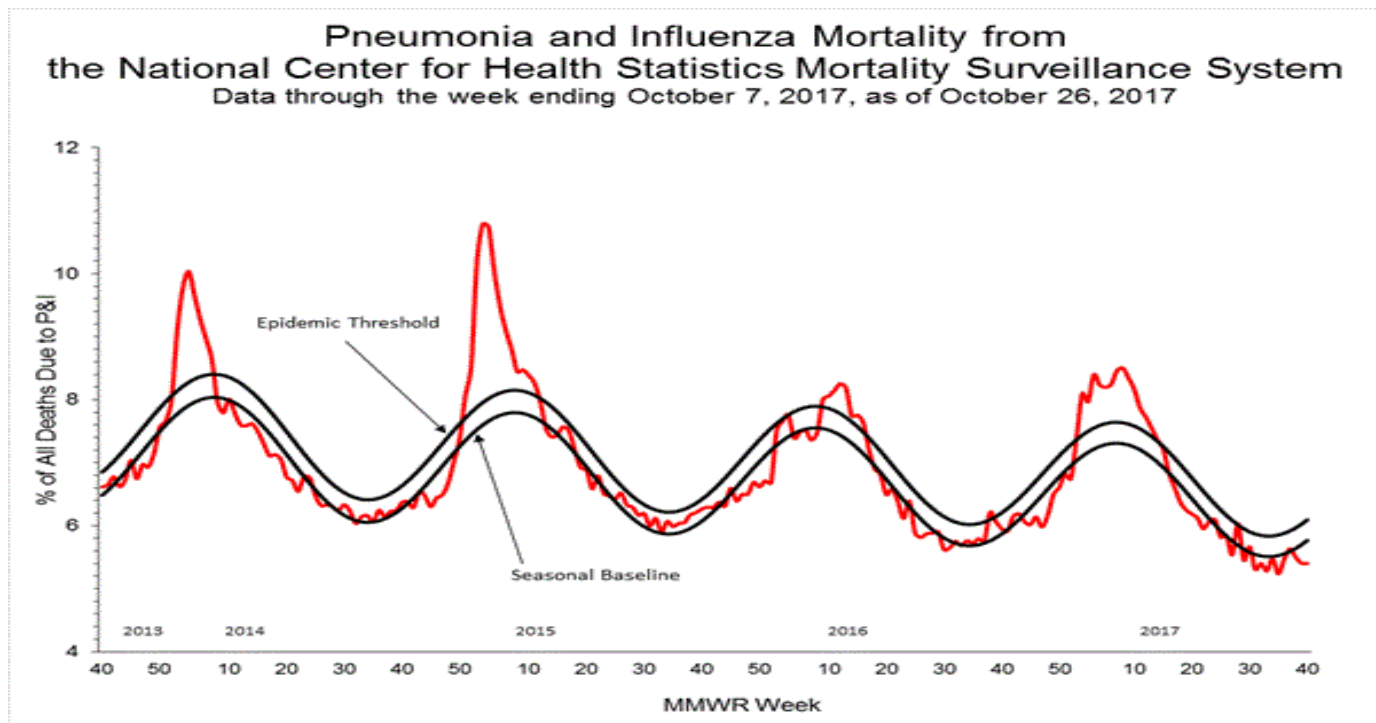


Washington State News

According to the Washington State Department of Health's most recent influenza update, flu activity remains low and is characterized as sporadic in Washington. During week 41, 11 out of 563 specimens (2.0%) tested by the World Health Organization/National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (WHO/NREVSS) collaborating laboratories in Washington were positive for influenza A (not subtyped). During week 41, the proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 0.3 percent, below the baseline of 1.1 percent. Zero lab-confirmed influenza deaths have been reported for the 2017-2018 season to date (October 01, 2017 through October 14, 2017).

Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality Surveillance

The most current National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) mortality surveillance data is included below for reference. Of the deaths occurring during the week ending October 7, 2017 (week 40), 5.4% were due to pneumonia and influenza. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.1% for week 40.



Links to other influenza reports

[WA State Department of Health Weekly Influenza Updates](#)

[BC Centre for Disease Control](#)

[Centers for Disease Control Weekly Flu View](#)

[University of Washington Respiratory & Enteric Viruses](#)

[World Health Organization Influenza Page](#)

[HealthMap](#)



The mission of the Whatcom County Health Department is to lead the community in promoting health and preventing disease.

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