



Whatcom County 2016-17 Influenza Report

Weeks 17-18, April 23-May 6, 2017

Published by: WCHD Communicable Disease & Epidemiology Division

Summary

During week 17 there were four positive influenza B tests reported through PeaceHealth Laboratories. No data is available for week 18 due to PeaceHealth Laboratories now being managed by Quest Diagnostics. No deaths related to influenza were reported. Emergency room visits for respiratory complaints were not higher than expected during weeks 17-18. There were no new influenza outbreaks reported by long term care facilities in Whatcom County. Twenty-nine schools in Whatcom County reported elevated absenteeism rates during week 17, and thirty-three schools during week 18. The outpatient sentinel clinics reported no ILI (influenza-like-illness) visits.

There has been 1 lab confirmed, influenza-related death 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 PeaceHealth Laboratories.

CDC Week	12	13	14	15	16	17
End date	3/25/2017	4/1/2017	4/8/2017	4/15/2017	4/22/2017	4/29/2017
Influenza						
Total tests	88	88	48	28	55	30
N(%) Positive A	4(4.5%)	0(0%)	3(6.3%)	0(0%)	2(3.6%)	0(0%)
N(%) Positive B	11(12.5%)	10(11.5%)	4(8.3%)	2(7.1%)	9(16.4%)	4(13.3%)
RSV						
Total tests	20	17	15	9	15	10
N(%) Positive	3(15%)	0(0%)	1(6.7%)	0(0%)	2(13.3%)	1(10%)

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 not higher than expected during weeks 17-18.

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 17-18.

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-nine schools (out of fifty-four schools reporting) in Whatcom County reported at least one day during week 17, and thirty-three schools during week 18, on which their absenteeism rate exceeded 10%.

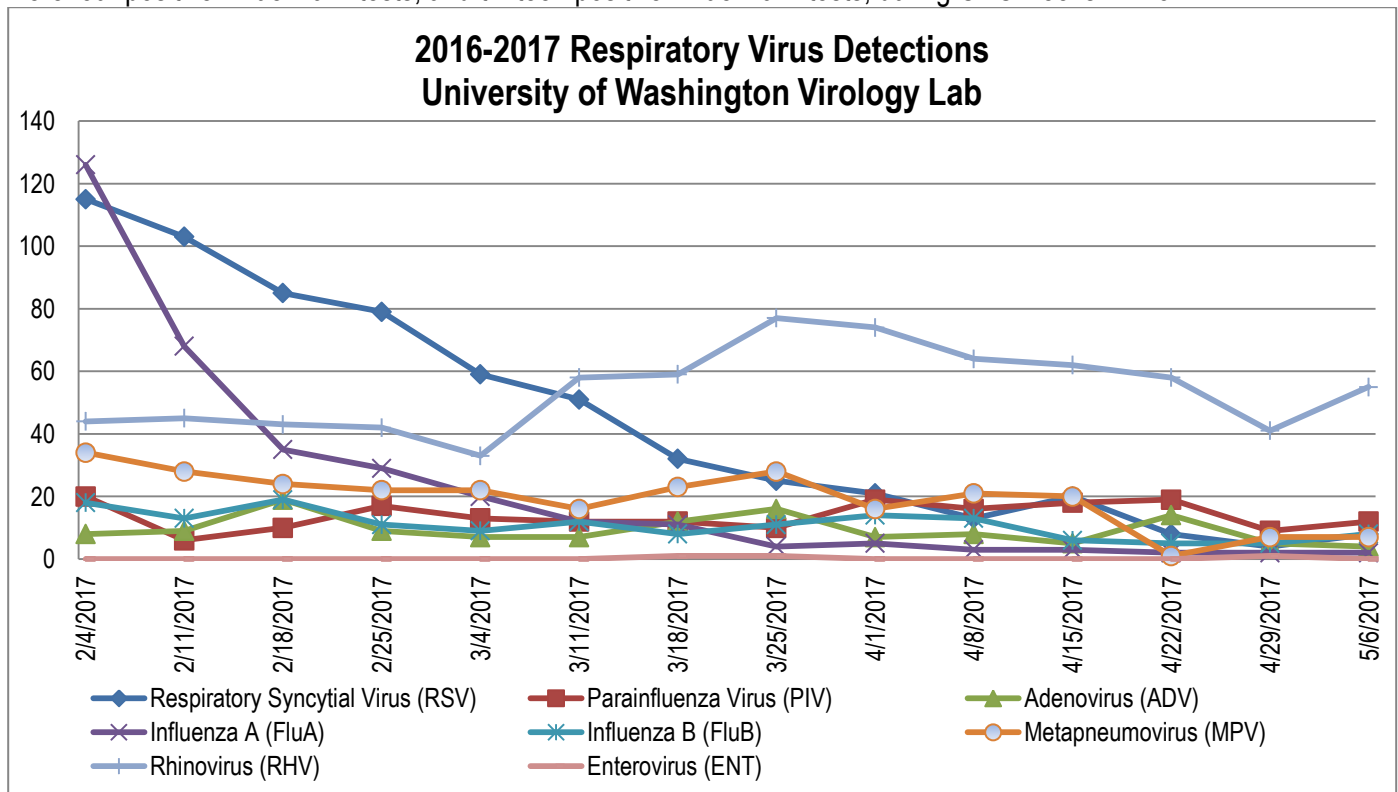
Outpatient Clinic Visits

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]. No data is available for Clinic B.

	CDC Week	13	14	15	16	17	18
End date		4/1/2017	4/8/2017	4/15/2017	4/22/2017	4/29/2017	5/6/2017
Clinic A							
	Total visits	250	303	324	286	287	340
	% ILI	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(0.3%)	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 four positive influenza A tests, and thirteen positive influenza B tests, during CDC weeks 17-18.



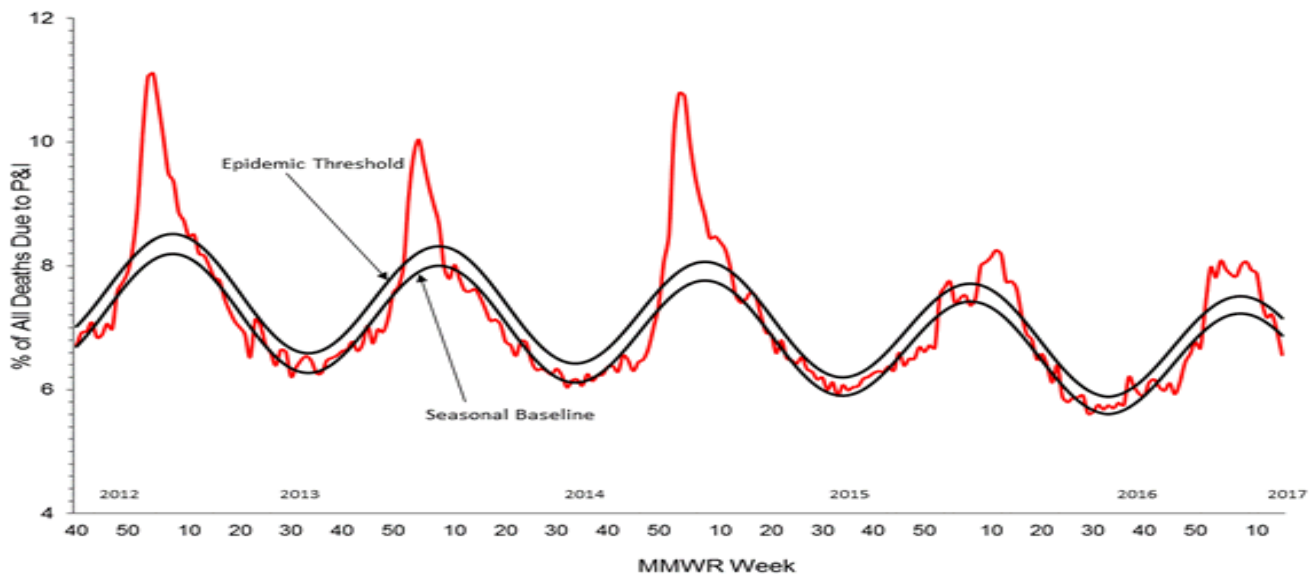
Washington State News

According to the Washington State Department of Health's most recent influenza update, flu activity remains low and is characterized as local in Washington. During week 17, 17 out of 369 specimens (4.6%) tested by the World Health Organization/National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (WHO/NREVSS) collaborating laboratories in Washington were positive for influenza: 1 influenza A (2009 H1N1), 3 influenza A (H3N2), 1 influenza A (not subtyped), and 12 influenza B (not lineage typed). During week 17, the proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 0.4 percent, below the baseline of 1.1 percent. Two hundred seventy three lab-confirmed influenza deaths have been reported for the 2016-2017 season to date.

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 April 15, 2017 (week 15), 6.6% were due to pneumonia and influenza. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 7.2% for week 15.

**Pneumonia and Influenza Mortality from
the National Center for Health Statistics Mortality Surveillance System**
Data through the week ending April 15, 2017, as of May 4, 2017



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](#)

<http://depts.washington.edu/rspvirus/documents/VD2016-17.pdf>

[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.

509 Girard Street, Bellingham WA 98225
P (360) 778-6000 F (360) 778-6001

1500 North State Street, Bellingham, WA 98225
P (360) 778-6100 F (360) 778-6101

