



Whatcom County 2017-18 Influenza Report

Weeks 44-45, October 29-November 11, 2017

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Summary

During weeks 44-45 there were six positive influenza A 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 end of week 45. There were no new influenza outbreaks reported by long term care facilities in Whatcom County. Thirty-one schools in Whatcom County reported elevated absenteeism rates during week 44, and twenty-one schools during week 45. The outpatient sentinel clinics reported four 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	40	41	42	43	44	45
End date	10/7/2017	10/14/2017	10/21/2017	10/28/2017	11/4/2017	11/11/2017
Influenza						
Total tests	41	35	59	59	58	55
N(%) Positive A	2(4.9%)	No Data	2(3.4%)	1(1.7%)	4(7.0%)	2(3.6%)
N(%) Positive B	0(0%)	No Data	0(0%)	2(3.4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
RSV						
Total tests	1	4	11	1	1	1
N(%) Positive	0(0%)	No Data	0(0%)	0(0%)	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 end of week 45.

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 44-45.

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. Thirty-one schools (out of fifty-four schools reporting) in Whatcom County reported at least one day during week 44, and twenty-one schools during week 45, on which their absenteeism rate exceeded 10%.

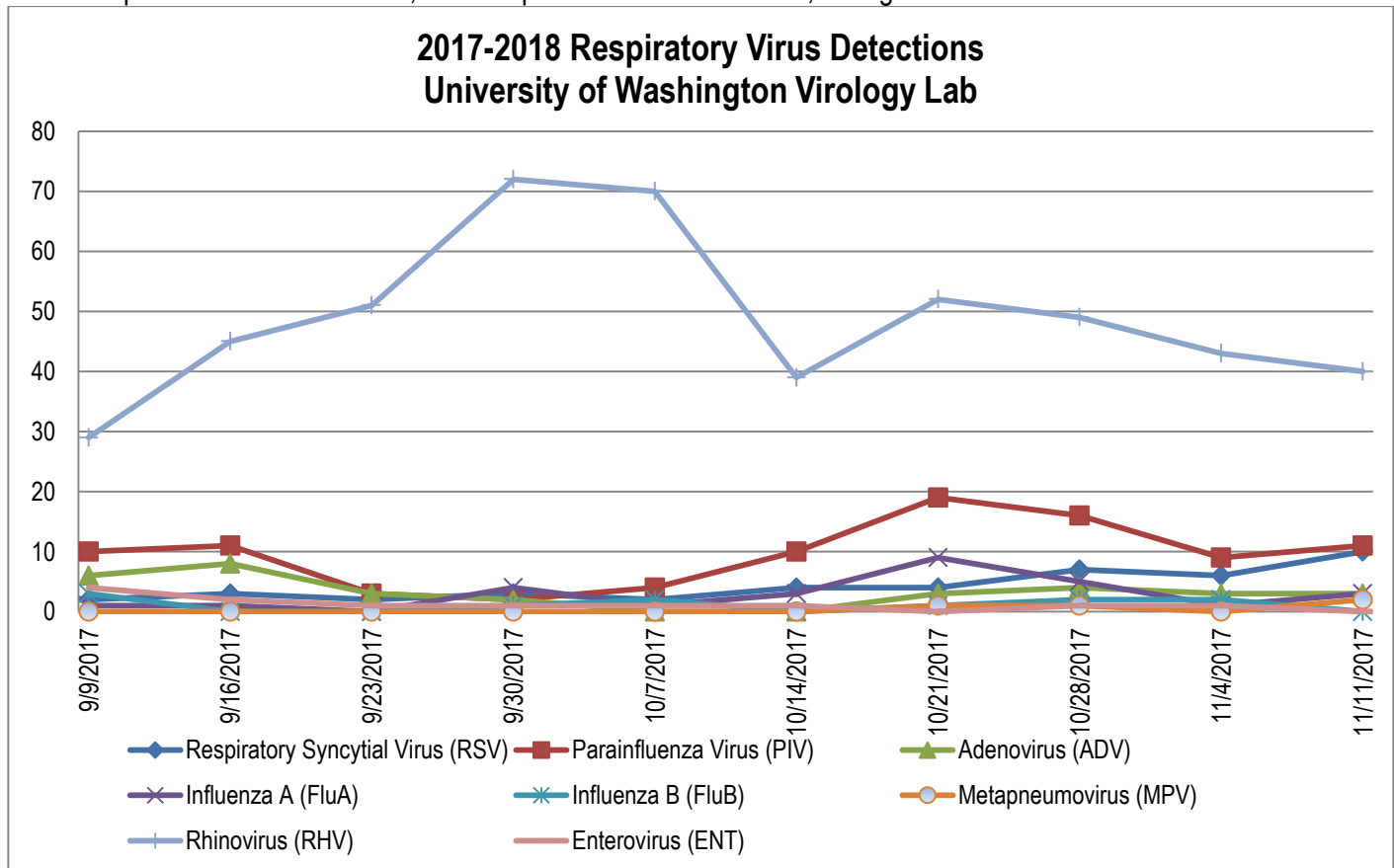
Outpatient Clinic Visits

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	44	45
End date		10/7/2017	10/14/2017	10/21/2017	10/28/2017	11/4/2017	11/11/2017
Clinic A							
	Total visits	292	284	443	404	427	347
	% ILI	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(0.5%)	0(0%)	1(0.2%)	0(0%)
Clinic B							
	Total visits	37	30	28	38	16	No Data
	% ILI	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	3(18.8%)	No Data

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 two positive influenza B tests, during CDC weeks 44-45.

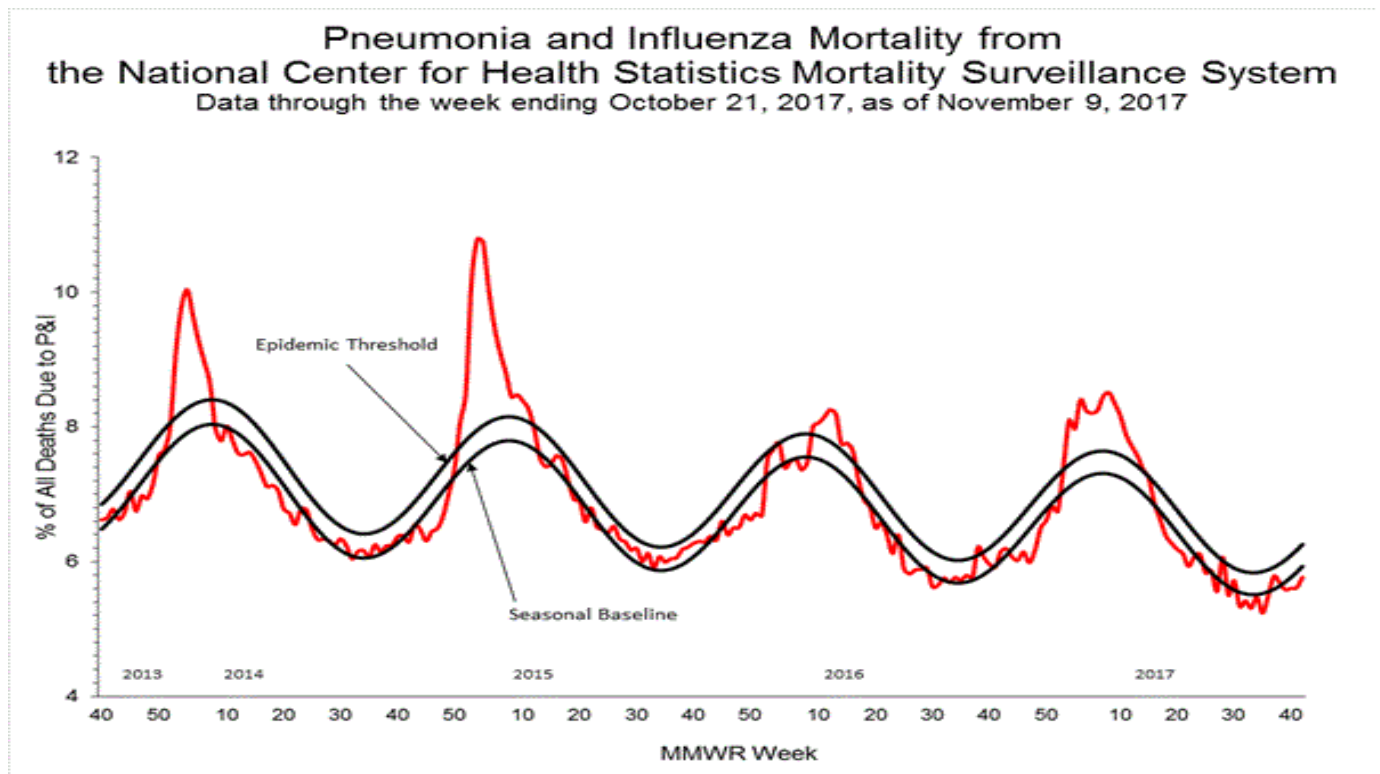


Washington State News

According to the Washington State Department of Health's most recent influenza update, flu activity remained low during week 44 in Washington. One influenza-like illness outbreak has been reported in a long-term care facility. 0.7 percent of visits among Influenza-like Illness Network participants are for influenza-like illness, below the threshold of 1.1 percent. Influenza A is most common right now. One lab-confirmed influenza death has been reported for the 2017-2018 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 October 21, 2017 (week 42), 5.8% were due to pneumonia and influenza. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.3% for week 42.



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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