

First Lab-Confirmed Influenza (A) Case in the Simcoe Muskoka Area

Attention: Physicians, Long-Term Care Facilities, Rest & Retirement Homes, Emergency Departments, Infection Control Practitioners, Nurse Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Family Health Teams, Occupational Health Professionals, Neighbouring Health Units, County of Simcoe Paramedic Services, Medavie EMS Ontario – Muskoka, Rama Mnjikaning EMS, CLHIN, NSMLHIN

Date: November 9, 2017

The Public Health Ontario (PHO) Laboratory has reported Simcoe Muskoka's first locally-acquired lab confirmed case of Influenza A for the 2017-2018 season. The sample was submitted as part of an individual case investigation in the Orillia area.

Influenza activity has been detected in most of Ontario which is typical for this time of year. The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) will continue to analyze surveillance data and provide updates as necessary.

The following is an update of the influenza activity in Ontario and Canada:

Ontario:

- As of October 27, 2017 (Week 43) a total of 78 cases have been detected in Ontario. Of these cases, 88.5% were influenza A. Of the 30 reported influenza A cases with subtype information available, 73.3% were H3N2 and 26.7% were H1N1.

Canada:

- In week 43, influenza activity continues to increase but remains at interseasonal levels across the country.
- The percentage of laboratory tests positive for influenza remains higher for this time of year compared to previous years. The majority of influenza detections continue to be Influenza A (H3N2).

This year's trivalent influenza vaccines for the 2017-2018 influenza season (northern hemisphere winter), contain the following:

- an A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Hong Kong/4801/2014 (H3N2)-like virus; and
- a B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus.

At this time it is too early to determine if the vaccine is a good match for the circulating strains.

Beginning this year, the PHO Lab will no longer be conducting multiplex respiratory viral PCR (MRVP) which includes influenza testing on any specimens collected from Emergency Room or ambulatory/outpatient settings. Influenza testing for patients in the emergency department may be done based on the hospital's laboratory capabilities and policies for rapid influenza or/and PCR testing. Diagnosis without testing will need to be made based on local activity and compatible signs and symptoms. For more detailed information, please go to

http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/LAB_SD_121_Respiratory_Viral_Testing_Algorithm_and_Enhanced_Surveillance_Update.pdf

The Weekly Influenza News will be posted between November 1st and April 30th. You can find this information at the following link: <http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/InfectiousDiseases/SeasonalInfluenza/Surveillance.aspx>

All lab-confirmed influenza cases and institutional respiratory outbreaks are reportable to public health to ensure timely follow-up. For additional information or to report influenza cases and respiratory outbreaks, please contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Communicable Disease Team at (705) 721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 extension 8809.

Additional Information on Influenza

1. Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Influenza information can be accessed at:
<http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/Immunization/flu.aspx>
2. Public Health Agency of Canada, Issues of FluWatch can be accessed at:
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/index-eng.php>
3. NACI Statement on Influenza Vaccination for the 2017-18 season can be accessed at:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-2017-2018.html>
4. Public Health Ontario now issues the Ontario Respiratory Virus Bulletin which can be accessed at:
<http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/SurveillanceServices/Pages/Ontario-Respiratory-Virus-Bulletin.aspx>