

Weekly Influenza News

Week 17: April 21 to April 27, 2019

Week in Review:

Influenza Activity Indicator	Assessment of Indicator*	Interpretation
<u>Reported cases</u>	Similar	15 local lab-confirmed cases reported in week 17 ; 18 cases reported in week 16
<u>Percent Positive of Flu Specimens[†]</u>	Similar	Simcoe Muskoka: - flu A (22.7%); flu B (0.0%) Ontario: - flu A (14.6%); flu B (1.5%)
<u>Local Institutional Outbreaks</u>	Similar	Nineteen institutional influenza outbreaks reported for the 2018-19 season to date.
<u>Local Emergency Department respiratory visits: week 17</u>	Similar	Percentage of visits is similar compared to previous week and higher compared to the same period for the 2017-18 season.
Week 17 Overall Assessment April 21 to April 27, 2019	Similar	Reported Activity Level: Localized 14 cases of Flu A in SMDHU this week. 1 cases of Flu B in SMDHU this week.
<u>Predominant Influenza Strains:</u> Influenza A (H1N1 & H3N2)		

Notes: Reported activity level is based on the weekly submission of [Appendix C](#) to Public Health Ontario. Definition available [here](#).

*Compared to previous [surveillance week](#)

† Reported for week 16

Reported Local Influenza Cases

In Simcoe Muskoka, there have been **683 lab-confirmed influenza cases reported** as of 30 April 2019. 15 (2.2%) of which were reported in week 17 – this is similar compared to week 16.

Of the 673 reported influenza A cases, 144 have been subtyped:

- 78/144 (54%) are influenza A, H1 strain / H1N1 pdm09
- 66/144 (46%) are influenza A, H3 strain

🔗 Figure 2 and Figure 3 below provide historic comparisons

Table 1: Summary of influenza cases for 2018-19 season

Lab-confirmed Influenza Cases	Week 17		Season-to-Date	
	N	%	N	%
Influenza A	14	93%	673	99%
Influenza B	1	7%	10	1%
Influenza A & B	0	0%	0	0%
Total	15	100%	683	100%

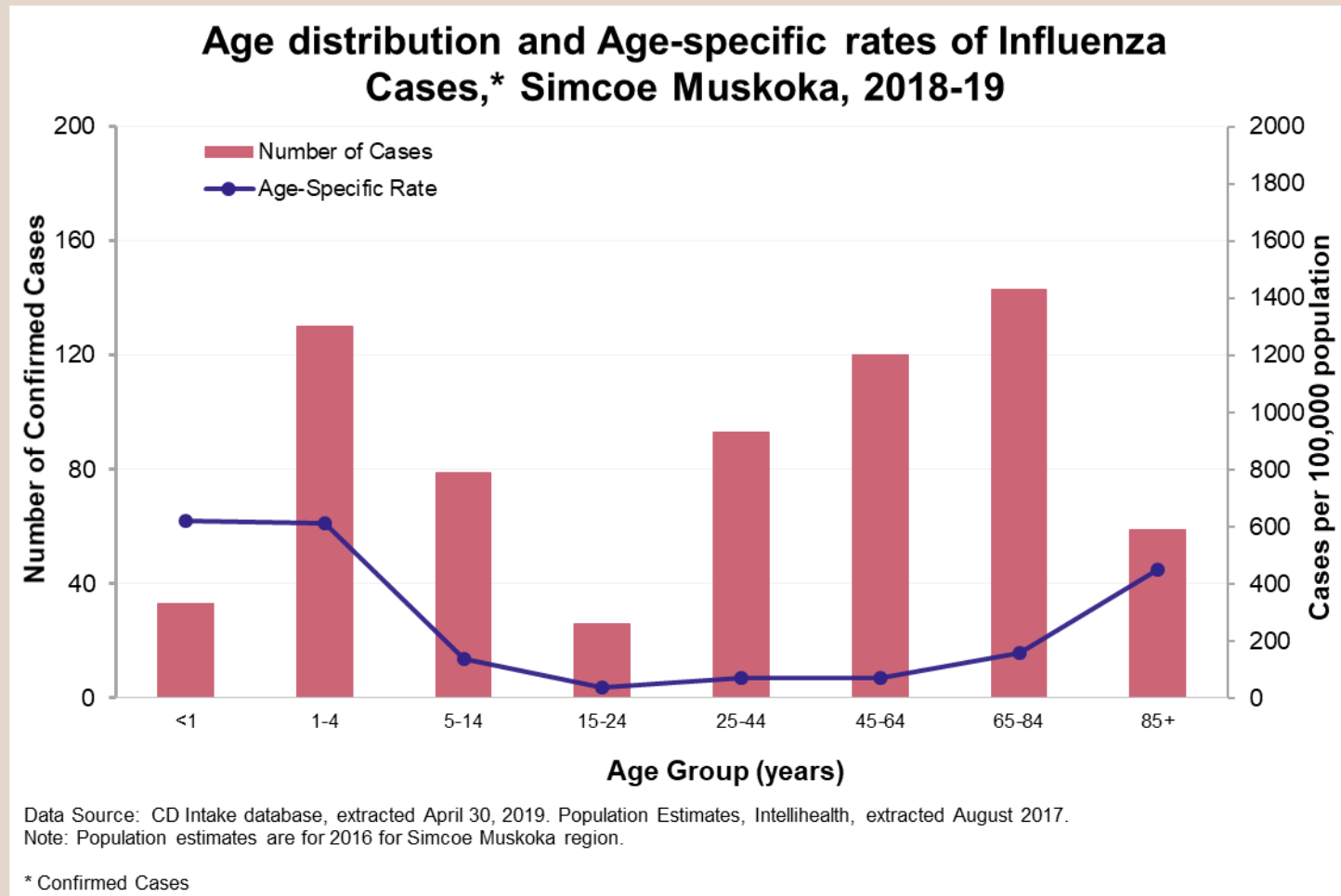
Notes:
Data source: Communicable Disease Intake Database, extracted on April 30, 2019.

Age Distribution

For the season-to-date, the majority of cases (70%) have been reported in individuals under the age of 65 years, with the highest age-specific rates being seen in children between one and four years (35% of cases have been in those under the age of 14 years). Nearly one-third (30%) of cases have been reported in individuals aged 65 and older.

Median age of reported flu cases: 40 years

Figure 1: Number and Age-specific Rate of Influenza Cases by Age Group, Simcoe Muskoka, September 2018 to present



Historical Comparison

Figure 2: Reported Influenza Cases, Type A, Current Influenza Season with Historical Comparison, Simcoe Muskoka

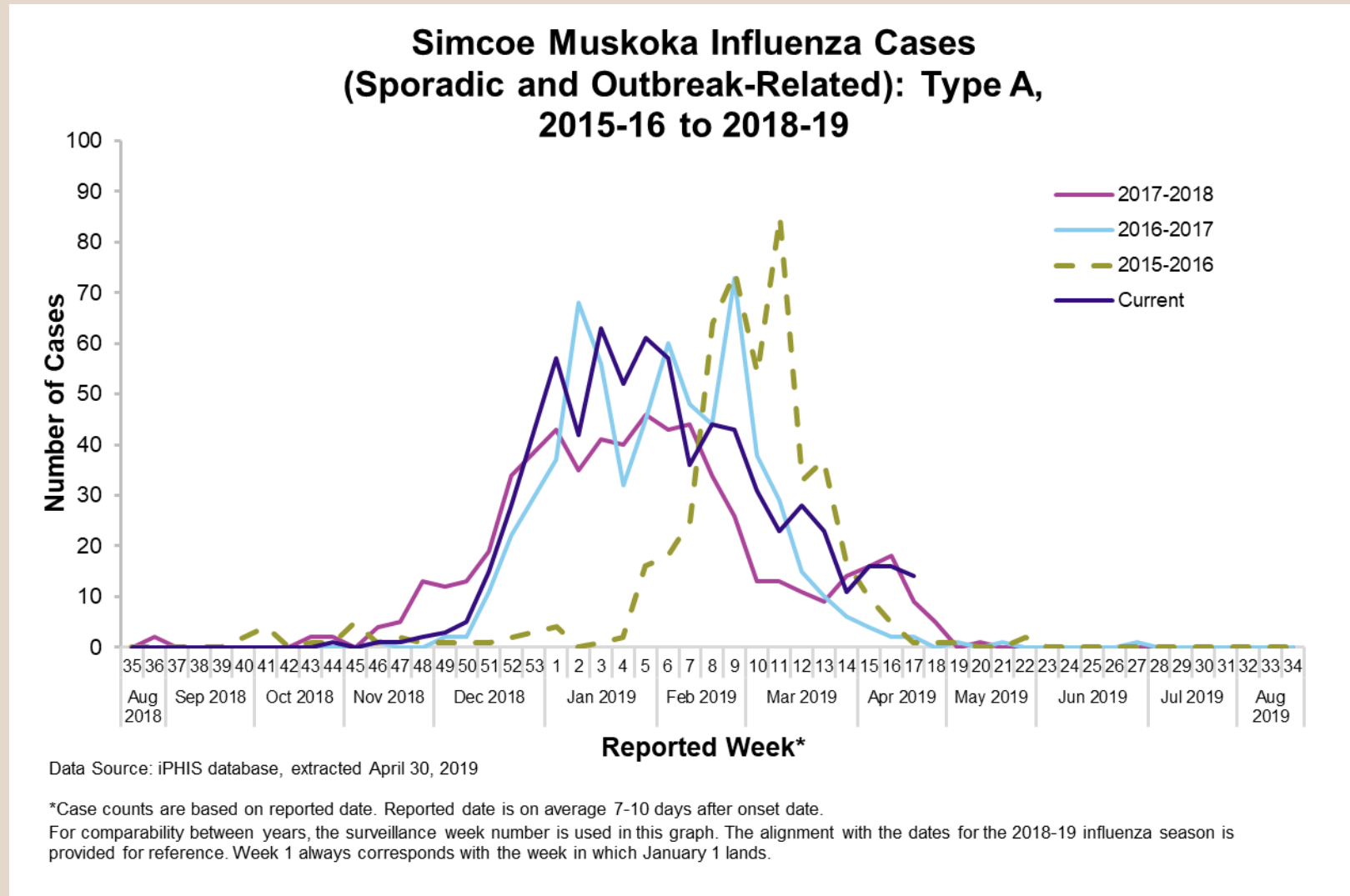
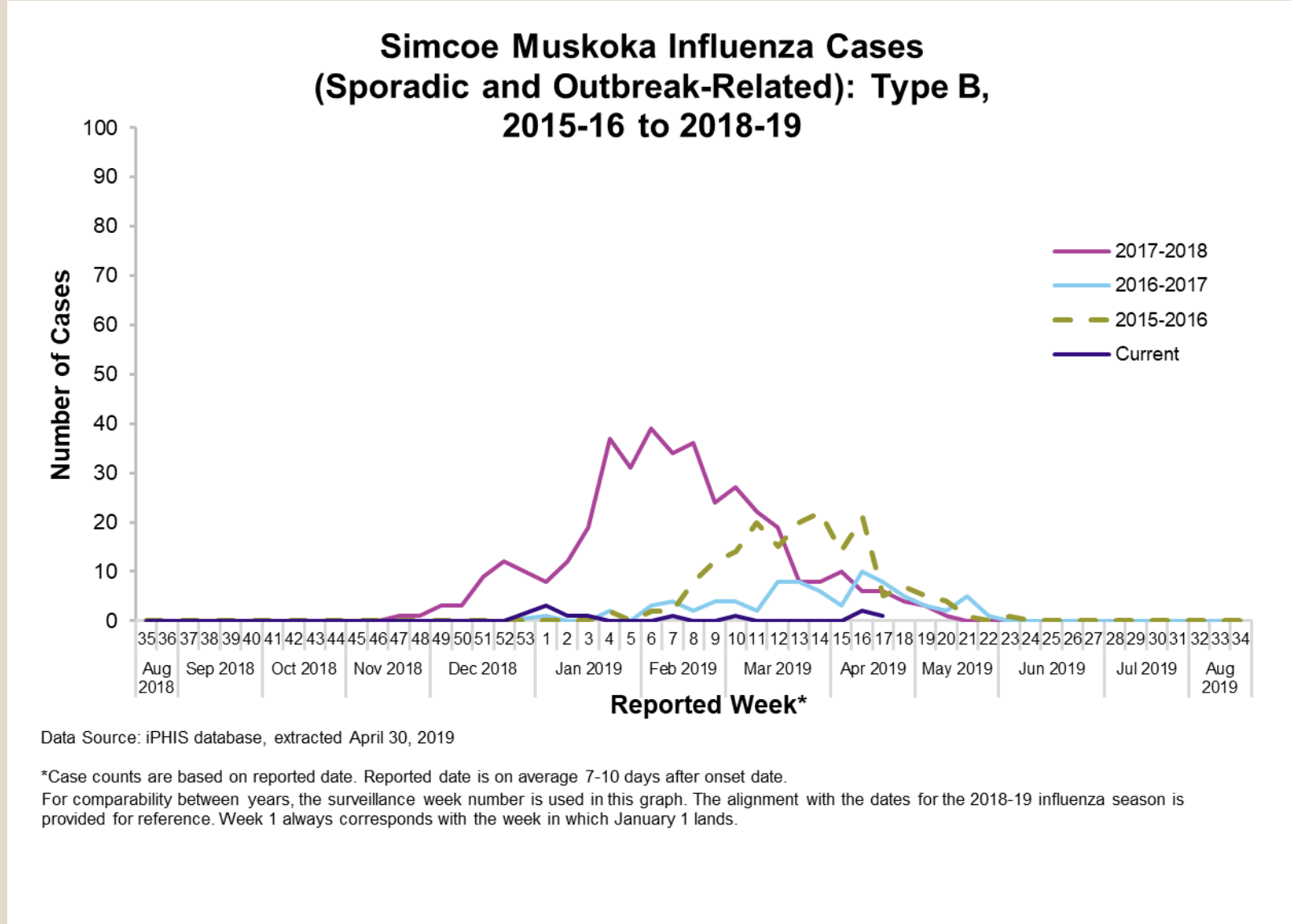


Figure 3: Reported Influenza Cases, Type B, Current Influenza Season with Historical Comparison, Simcoe Muskoka



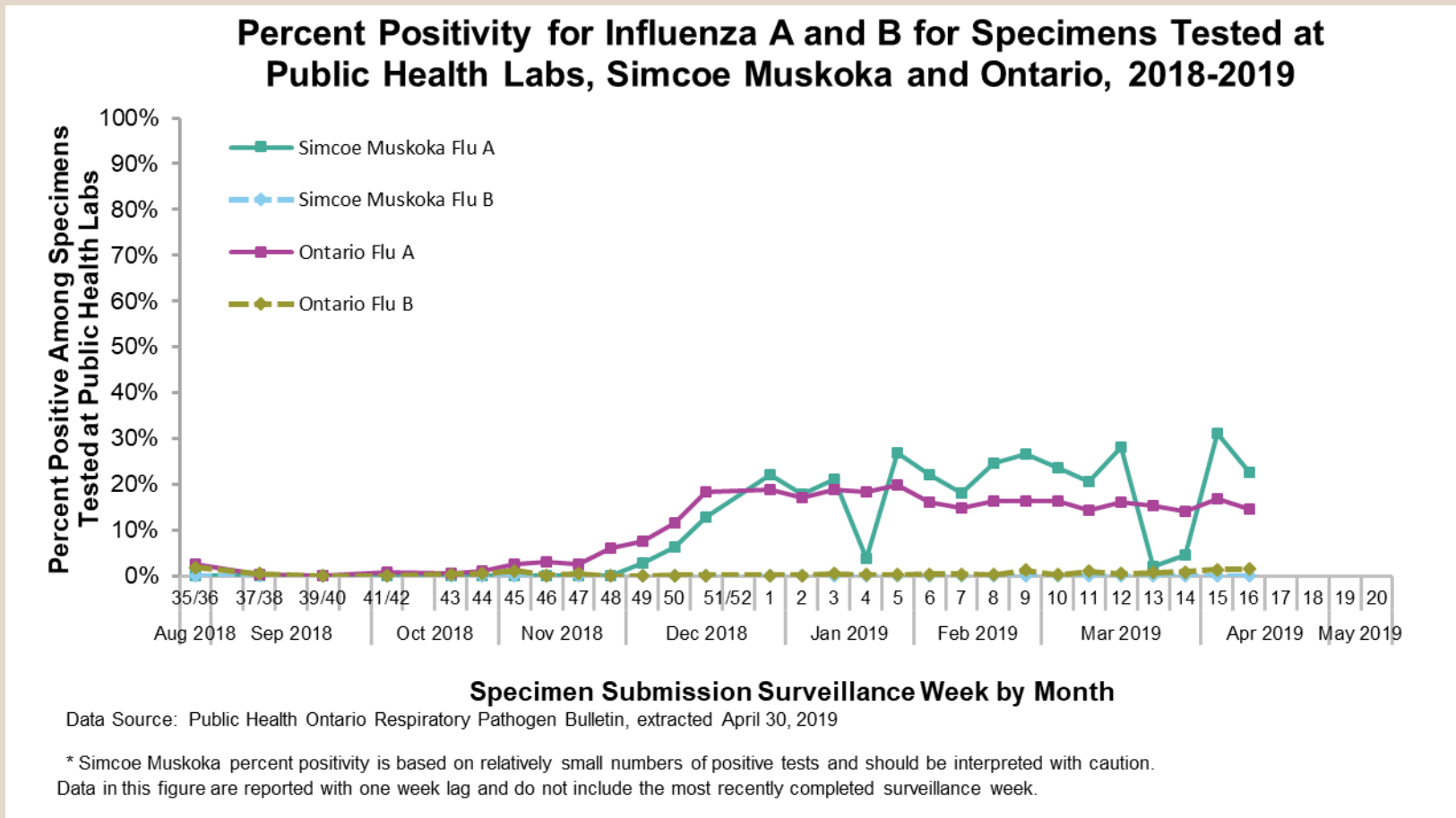
Percent positivity

Note: Percent positivity is reported with one week lag and does not include week 17.

The percentage of flu specimens that are positive (percent positivity) for Influenza A and Influenza B has started to decrease. The provincial percent positivity for influenza A in week 16 was reported at 14.6%, which is lower when compared to week 15. Influenza B percent positivity was reported at 1.5% for week 16.

Locally for week 16, percent positivity for influenza A was reported at 22.7%, while influenza B was 0.0%.

Figure 4: Percent Positivity, Influenza A & B, Simcoe Muskoka & Ontario, 2018-19

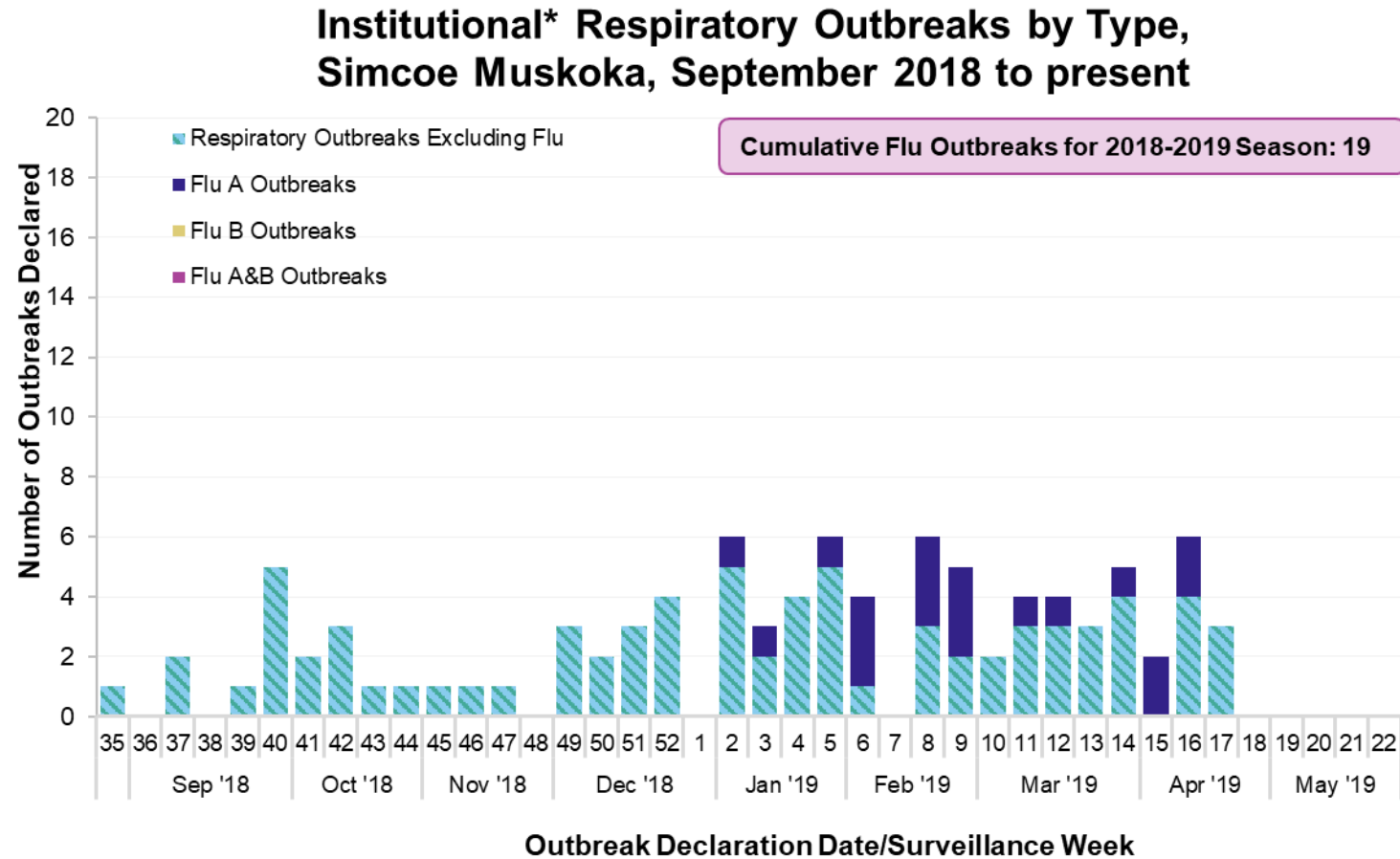


Institutional Respiratory Outbreaks

There have been 19 *lab-confirmed institutional flu outbreaks* in Simcoe Muskoka since September 1, 2018.

- All are influenza A outbreaks.

Figure 5: Institutional Outbreaks by Respiratory Pathogen, Simcoe Muskoka, 2018-19



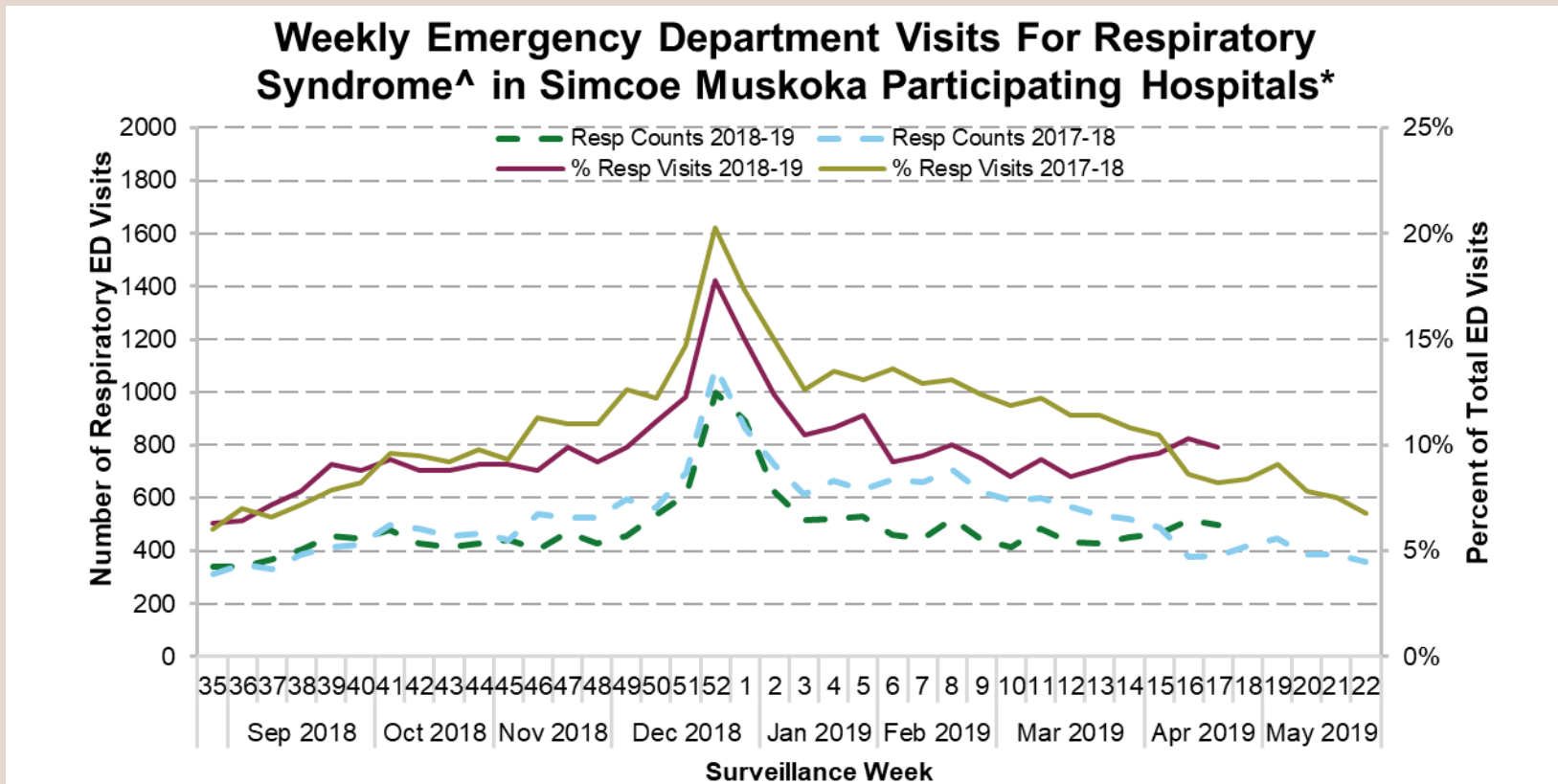
Data Source: SMDHU Outbreak Log, 2018-19, extracted April 30, 2019.

* Confirmed outbreaks. Institutions can include acute care facilities, long term care facilities, retirement homes and child care facilities.

Local Emergency Department Visits

Emergency department visits for respiratory syndrome in Simcoe Muskoka accounted for 9.9% of visits in week 17. This is similar when compared to week 16, and higher when compared to the same point in the 2017-18 season.

Figure 6: Emergency Department Visits for Respiratory Syndrome at Participating Simcoe Muskoka Hospital, 2017-18, 2018-19 Seasons



Data Source: Acute Care Enhanced Surveillance (ACES) System, extracted April 29, 2019
 Data is considered preliminary and subject to change.
 ^ Respiratory syndrome is defined as “respiratory infection non croup, non bronchiolitis. Includes sore throat, cough, cold, ear infection, blocked ear, earache etc”. This syndrome does not include influenza-like illness, which is “fever, myalgia, undifferentiated flu”.
 *Participating hospitals are: RVH, OSMH, MAH (Bracebridge and Huntsville), GBGH and CGMH. Includes Simcoe Muskoka residents and visitors.

The above data is provided through Acute Care Enhanced Surveillance (ACES), an emergency department (ED) syndromic surveillance system managed by KFLA Public Health Informatics for participating Ontario hospitals. Six hospitals participate in Simcoe Muskoka.

Vaccine Match and Influenza Strains

The trivalent 2018-2019 influenza vaccine for the northern hemisphere contains the following strains:

- A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- A/Singapore/INFIMH-16-0019/2016 (H3N2)-like virus; and
- B/Colorado/06/2017-like virus (B/Victoria/2/87 lineage).

Table 2: Local, Provincial and National Matched and Mismatched Flu Specimens and National Match Percent, 2018-19

Influenza Strains	Number of Specimens with Strain Characterization Results		National Match Percent [†]
	Ontario	Canada	
Influenza A Vaccine Strains			
Influenza A (H3N2) A/Singapore/INFIMH-16-0019/2016-like	114	189	11%
Influenza A (H1N1) A/Michigan/45/2015-like	666	1,553	89%
Influenza B Vaccine Strains			
B/Colorado/06/2017-like	21	77	77%
B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (Quad vaccine only)	17	23	23%

Data Source: Ontario and Canada Counts: Public Health Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Report, Table 7: Strain characterization completed on influenza isolates at the National Microbiology Laboratory Surveillance week 16, extracted April 30, 2019.

Provincial and national counts are reported with one week lag and do not include the most recently completed surveillance week. Surveillance weeks can be found [here](#).

[†] Non-vaccine match strains are not reported. Percent match is based on antigenically similar strains. Antigenic similarity may not be reflective of influenza vaccine effectiveness.

As of week 16, 139 additional specimens did not grow to sufficient hemagglutination titers for antigenic characterization, but were found to be of the same genetic group as A/Singapore/INFIMH-16-0019/2016-like virus through sequence analysis.

Technical Notes

Definitions

Percentage positivity: the number of positive flu cases divided by the number of specimens tested at Public Health Ontario Labs

Reported activity level: the level of influenza activity that is reported to Public Health Ontario by Simcoe Muskoka, based on influenza cases and outbreaks. Definitions available [here](#).

Surveillance week: The week number corresponding to the week of year, running Sunday to Saturday, inclusive, for reporting influenza activity. January 1 always falls within week 1. A list of the current season's surveillance weeks can be found [here](#).

Limitations

Timeliness:

The provincial data are from one week previous because that is the most recent data available.

The hospital data, local counts of influenza, and outbreaks are current to date.

The number of cases listed in a given surveillance week may change as more information becomes available

Case-Follow-up and iPHIS Data Entry:

While Public Health Ontario only requires case information as provided by the laboratory report, the health unit investigates all outbreak cases, as information is available, in order to provide a more accurate local picture of adverse outcomes and subtyping.

Case Reporting:

Sporadic cases do not accurately describe all cases of influenza as those cases reported are skewed towards individuals more likely to seek medical care and be tested (e.g. young, elderly and immunocompromised).

Additional Resources

Simcoe Muskoka

- [Influenza Fact Sheet](#)
- [Influenza HealthSTATS page](#)

Provincial

- [Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin](#)
- [Public Health Ontario Laboratory Respiratory Pathogen Surveillance Reports](#)
- [ILI Mapper](#)

Week 16 Provincial Summary: For the 2018-2019 surveillance season to week 16, 11,899 laboratory-confirmed influenza cases have been reported across Ontario, 308 (2.6%) of which were reported in week 16. Among cumulative cases, 97.4% (11,588/11,899) were influenza A. Of the 2,631 reported influenza A cases with subtype information available, 44.0% (1,157/2,631) were H3 and 56.0% (1,474/2,631) were (H1N1)pdm09.

(Source: Public Health Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin, Surveillance Week 16, extracted April 30, 2019)

National

- [Public Health Agency of Canada FluWatch](#)

International Resources

- [WHO Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System](#)