

### Section 1: Summary

Influenza activity continues decrease and Influenza A (H3N2) continues to be predominant strain overall this season.

### Section 2: Outbreaks

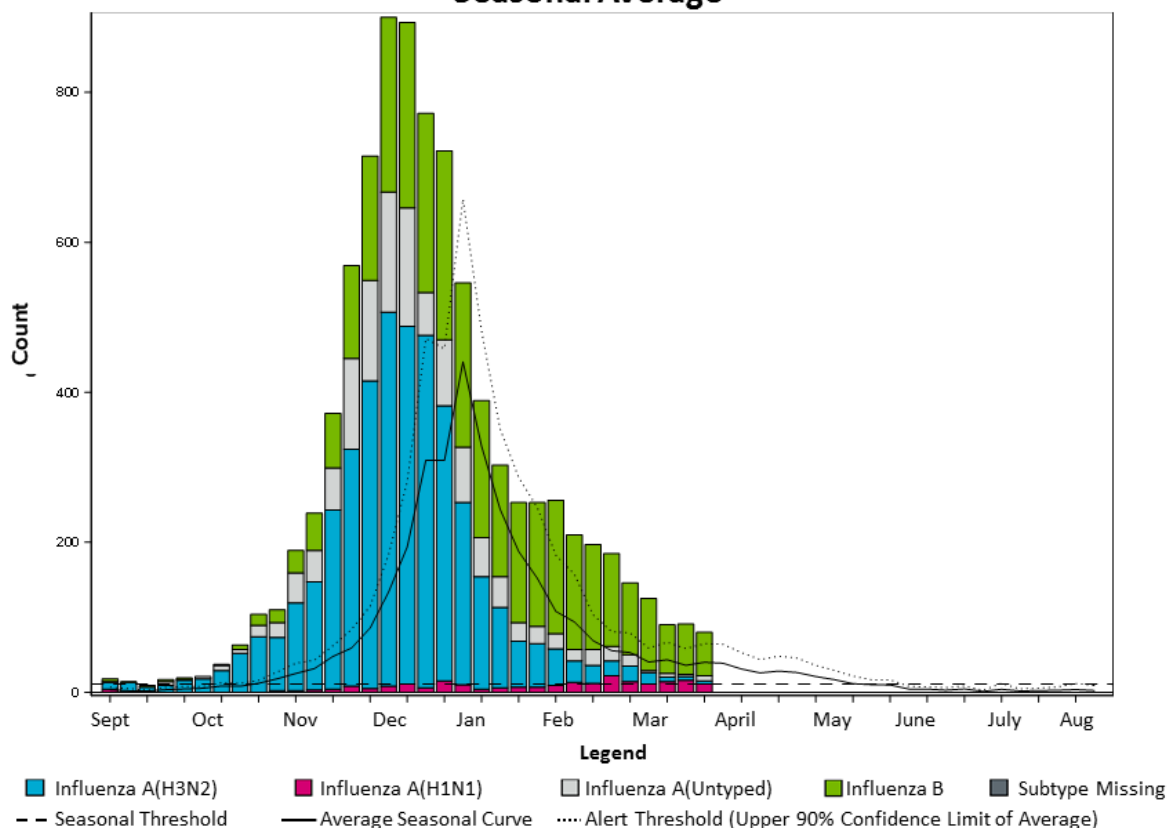
In week 15, there was one outbreak and there are 275 outbreaks reported to date.

	Outbreaks	
	Current Week	YTD
North	0	32
Edmonton	1	86
Central	0	33
Calgary	0	98
South	0	25
Unknown	0	1
Alberta	0	275

### Section 3: Laboratory-Confirmed Influenza Surveillance & Peak Prediction

To date in the 2017/18 season, the Provincial Laboratory for Public Health (ProvLab) has reported 8,907 lab-confirmed influenza cases: 5,589 influenza A and 3,318 influenza B. The predominant subtype is influenza A (H3N2) with 46% of all isolates. Influenza B activity is dominant following the peak while activity overall continues to decrease.

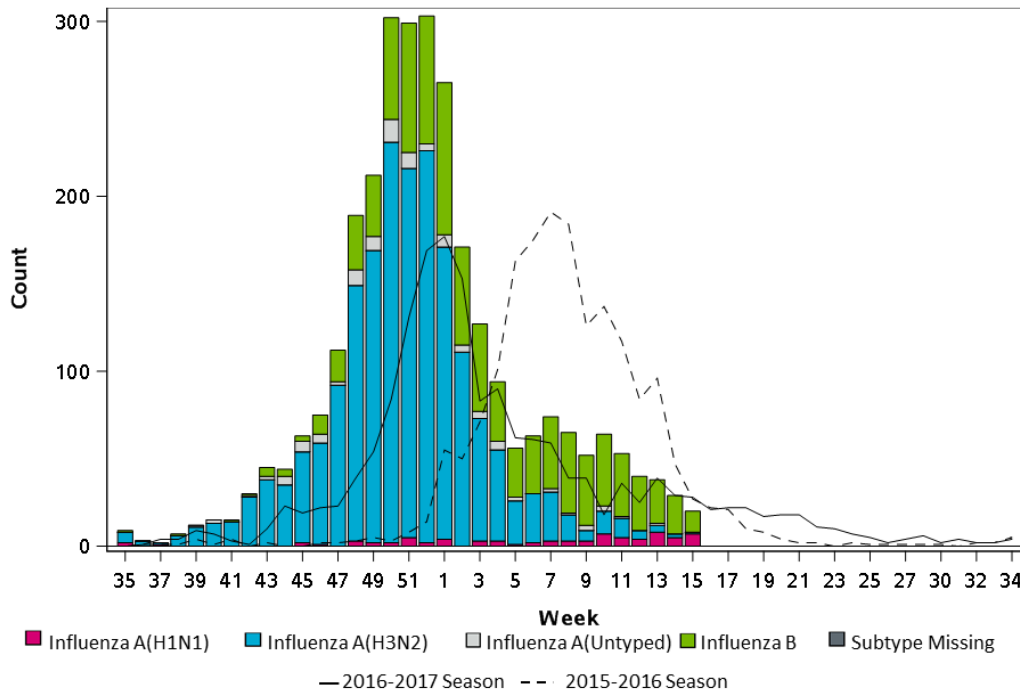
2017/18 Lab-Confirmed Influenza Cases by Serotype and Week, Compared to Seasonal Average



## Section 4: Hospitalizations

There have been 2,948 hospitalized influenza cases and 227 patients admitted to the ICU to date. The predominant subtype in hospitalized patients is Influenza A (H3N2).

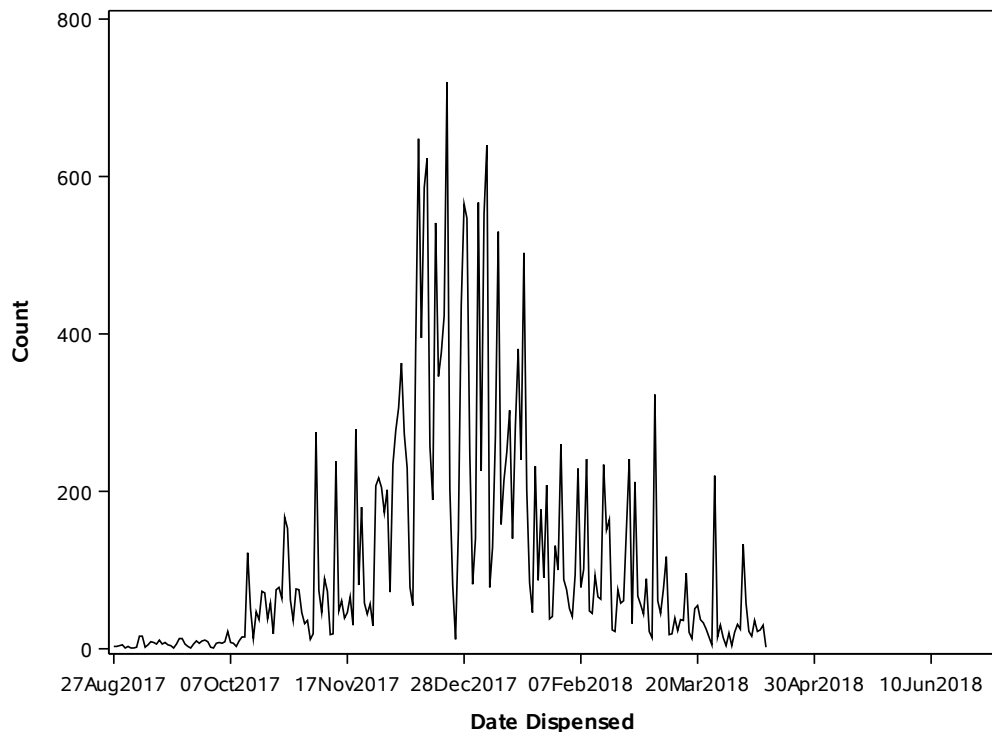
**Hospitalized Influenza Cases in 2017/2018, by Serotype and Week**



## Section 5: Antiviral Prescriptions

The number of antivirals dispensed by community pharmacists provides an indication of the amount of influenza circulating in the community. There were 129 prescriptions dispensed in week fifteen. There have been 26,345 prescriptions dispensed to date.

**Number of Patients Filling a Prescription for an Antiviral, by Date Dispensed**



**Section 6: Antiviral Resistance**

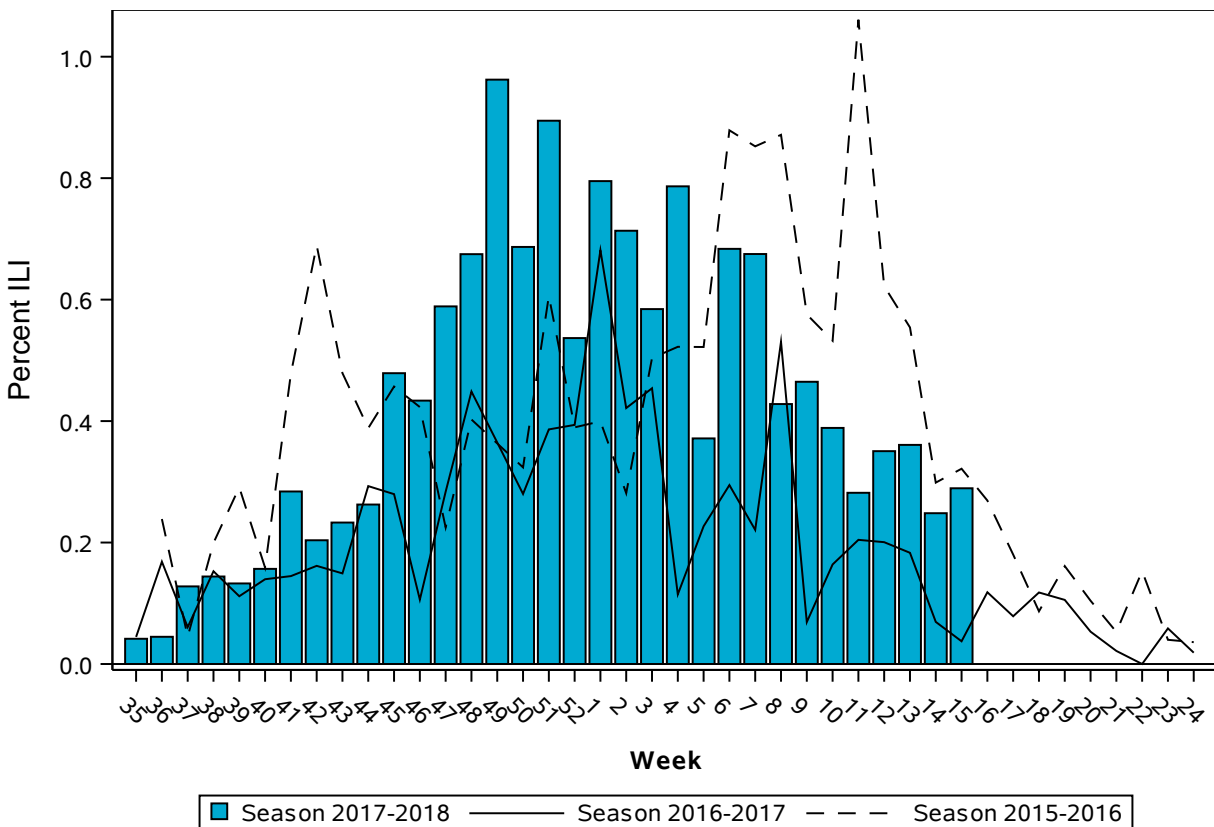
As of Sept. 1, 2017, 3,146 influenza isolates have been characterized by the National Medical Laboratory (NML). Of the 1,318 influenza viruses tested for resistance to Oseltamivir, one H3N2 virus, one H1N1 virus and one influenza B virus were found to be resistant. All 1,314 influenza viruses tested were sensitive to Zanamivir except two Influenza B viruses.

**Section 7: Influenza-Like Illness – TARRANT**

Sentinel physicians report cases of ILI seen in their practices. Sentinel physicians saw 14 cases of influenza-like illness in week 15 (0.3% of all patients seen). There were 14 cases of ILI (0.2%) seen by physicians in week 14.

	Sentinel Doctors (#)	Sentinel Recorders This Week (#)	Patients Seen (#)	ILI Cases (#)	Patients with ILI (%)
<b>Calgary Zone</b>	69	39	2495	10	0.4
<b>Central Zone</b>	14	10	441	1	0.2
<b>Edmonton Zone</b>	11	7	1018	1	0.1
<b>Northern Zone</b>	7	5	264	1	0.4
<b>South Zone</b>	12	4	622	1	0.2
<b>Alberta</b>	113	65	4838	14	0.3

**Percent of Patient Visits Due to Influenza-Like Illness at Sentinel Physicians, by Week and Season**



For more information, please go to: <http://calgaryfamilymedicine.ca/tarrant/>

## Section 8: Acknowledgments

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Alberta Health would like to thank Alberta Health Services (AHS), First Nations Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB), the Provincial Laboratory for Public Health (ProvLab), the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML), and TARRANT sentinel physician system for their partnership in influenza surveillance in Alberta.

## Section 9: Canadian and International Influenza Activity

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The following links provide access to other websites related to influenza and ILI.

- Alberta Health (Influenza Reports) <http://www.health.alberta.ca/professionals/influenza-evidence.html>
- Alberta Health (Influenza Forms) <http://www.health.alberta.ca/professionals/notifiable-diseases-guide.html>
- Alberta Health Services <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/2891.asp>
- Canada – FluWATCH [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/index-eng.php](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/index-eng.php)
- World Health Organization [www.who.int/topics/influenza/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/influenza/en/)
- USA – CDC [www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/)

## Section 10: Data Notes

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This report utilized data from the Provincial Laboratory for Public Health (ProvLab), Alberta's influenza like illness (ILI) sentinel physician system (TARRANT), Supplemental Enhanced Service Event (SESE) physician claims data, the Pharmacy Information Network (PIN), as well as outbreak reports and hospitalized case report forms from Alberta Health's Communicable Disease Reporting System (CDRS).

### Defining Baselines and Thresholds for Lab-Confirmed Influenza Surveillance

An important function of influenza surveillance is to determine whether the timing or magnitude of the influenza season is unusual compared to previous seasons. The World Health Organization recommends comparing current-season influenza activity to the average epidemic curve, and to create two thresholds – one to determine when the influenza season has begun (seasonal threshold) and to determine at what point current influenza activity would be unusually high (alert threshold)<sup>1</sup>.

The average epidemic curve for lab-confirmed influenza surveillance was estimated using data collected between the 2010/11 and 2014/15 seasons. Lab-confirmed influenza became routinely reported in 2009; however, the 2009/10 pandemic season was excluded. The peaks of each season were aligned, and the average number of cases reported per aligned week was calculated as well as the 90 per cent confidence limit. The 90 per cent confidence limit acts as the Alert Threshold. If the number of cases reported in a week passes this threshold it is considered to be unusually high. Until the current season has peaked, the best estimate of the peak is utilized to align the current season to the average epidemic curve. The first estimate utilized was the median of the previous five seasons, week<sup>2</sup>.

The seasonal threshold was estimated as the average number of cases reported per week, in weeks considered outside of the influenza season (i.e., pre-season weeks). The start of the influenza epidemic was defined as the week in which the percent positivity of influenza A laboratory tests at ProvLab were  $\geq 10$  per cent of all respiratory laboratory tests ordered that week<sup>2</sup>. The end of the influenza epidemic was defined as the week in which the per cent positivity of influenza B was  $< 10$  per cent of all respiratory laboratory tests ordered that week<sup>2</sup>. All weeks in between these time periods were considered part of the influenza epidemic. Per cent positivity is an accepted method of determining the influenza season<sup>1</sup>, however visual inspection was also utilized to ensure face validity.

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization 2013 "Global Epidemiological Surveillance Standards for Influenza". Geneva. [http://www.who.int/influenza/resources/documents/influenza\\_surveillance\\_manual/en/](http://www.who.int/influenza/resources/documents/influenza_surveillance_manual/en/)

<sup>2</sup> Provincial Laboratory for Public Health (ProvLab) Weekly Respiratory Summary