

# RESPIRATORY WATCH

Week 1 (December 29, 2024 to January 4, 2025)

## Highlights of this reporting period<sup>1</sup>

The 2024-2025 season runs from August 25, 2024 to August 29, 2025

| Activity levels <sup>2</sup>   |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Influenza activity increased in week 1 (N=94) compared with the previous reporting period, week 52 (N=73).               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of PCR positive cases in this reporting period was lower than the number in the same reporting period in the 2023/24 season (N=193).</li> </ul> </li> <li>COVID-19 activity increased in week 1 (N=158) compared with the previous reporting period, week 52 (N=124).               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of PCR positive cases in this reporting period was lower than the number in the same reporting period in the 2023/24 season (N=238).</li> </ul> </li> <li>RSV activity increased during week 1 (N=158) compared with the previous reporting week 52 (N=138).               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of PCR-positive cases in week 1 was higher than the same reporting period in the 2023/24 season (N=126).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

## Influenza, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity during this reporting period and the 2024/25 season

|                                     | Influenza             |                | COVID-19              |                | RSV                   |                |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|                                     | This reporting period | 2024/25 season | This reporting period | 2024/25 season | This reporting period | 2024/25 season |
| <b>Laboratory testing</b>           |                       |                |                       |                |                       |                |
| New laboratory-confirmed cases      | 96                    | 290            | 158                   | 3061           | 158                   | 545            |
| Percent positivity (%) <sup>3</sup> | 6.3                   | -              | 9.2                   | -              | 10.2                  | -              |
| <b>Severe outcome<sup>4</sup></b>   |                       |                |                       |                |                       |                |
| Hospitalizations (non-ICU)          | 15                    | 51             | 0                     | 406            |                       |                |
| ICU admissions                      | 1                     | 5              | 0                     | 40             |                       |                |
| Deaths                              | 1                     | 2              | 1                     | 44             |                       |                |
| <b>Outbreaks<sup>5</sup></b>        |                       |                |                       |                |                       |                |
| Acute-care facility                 | 0                     | 1              | 2                     | 24             | 0                     | 1              |
| Long-term care facility             | 1                     | 3              | 5                     | 99             | 0                     | 6              |

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>ILI activity</b> | During this reporting period, the percentage of emergency room visits for influenza like illness (ILI) was 1.0%, a decrease from the previous week (1.8%). |
|---------------------|--|

<sup>1</sup> See data notes in Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> Use of multiplex polymerase chain reaction (PCR) respiratory virus testing may affect the number of tests conducted and number of cases identified and reported.

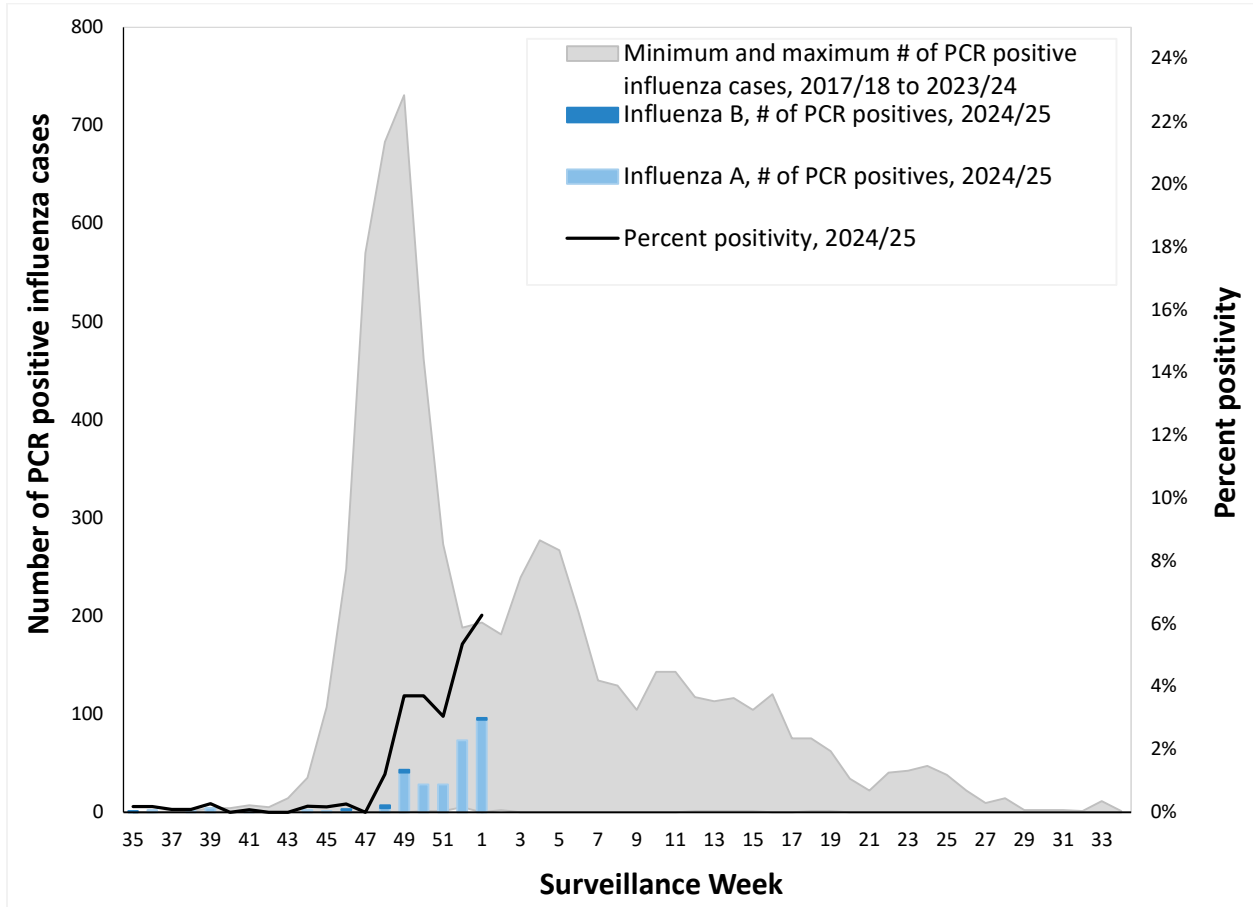
<sup>3</sup> Percent positivity is useful for understanding current pathogen spread in the community.

<sup>4</sup> New hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths in recent surveillance weeks may be undercounted because of reporting delays. Outcomes are not reported for RSV because it is not a notifiable condition in Nova Scotia.

<sup>5</sup> Local public health continuously enters and updates outbreak data. Counts may differ from previous surveillance weeks.

## Influenza

Figure 1: Laboratory-confirmed influenza cases (N=290) and percent positivity by surveillance week, 2024/25 season, compared with previous seasons, Nova Scotia<sup>6</sup>



<sup>6</sup> Minimum is zero during reporting weeks with no positive specimen in seasons 2019/20 to 2023/24. There were no influenza cases reported during the 2020-2021 season.

**Week 1 (December 29, 2024 to January 4, 2025)**

**Table 1: Number of laboratory-confirmed influenza cases during current reporting period and cumulative 2024/25 season, by zone, Nova Scotia<sup>7</sup>**

| Zone                     | Current reporting period |             |           | Cumulative (2024/25) |             |            |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------------|-------------|------------|
|                          | Influenza A              | Influenza B | Total     | Influenza A          | Influenza B | Total      |
| Western                  | 11                       | 1           | 12        | 29                   | 1           | 30         |
| Northern                 | 50                       | 0           | 50        | 100                  | 2           | 102        |
| Eastern                  | 2                        | 0           | 2         | 14                   | 1           | 15         |
| Central                  | 31                       | 1           | 32        | 137                  | 6           | 143        |
| <b>Nova Scotia Total</b> | <b>94</b>                | <b>2</b>    | <b>96</b> | <b>280</b>           | <b>10</b>   | <b>290</b> |

**Table 2: Number of laboratory-confirmed influenza cases during current reporting period and cumulative 2024/25 season, by age groups, Nova Scotia<sup>7</sup>**

| Age group (years)        | Current reporting period |             |           | Cumulative (2024/25) |             |            |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------------------|-------------|------------|
|                          | Influenza A              | Influenza B | Total     | Influenza A          | Influenza B | Total      |
| 0-4                      | 7                        | 0           | 7         | 24                   | 0           | 24         |
| 5-19                     | 4                        | 0           | 4         | 21                   | 4           | 25         |
| 20-44                    | 15                       | 2           | 17        | 56                   | 3           | 59         |
| 45-64                    | 25                       | 0           | 25        | 80                   | 2           | 82         |
| ≥ 65                     | 43                       | 0           | 43        | 99                   | 1           | 100        |
| <b>Nova Scotia Total</b> | <b>94</b>                | <b>2</b>    | <b>96</b> | <b>280</b>           | <b>10</b>   | <b>290</b> |

**Table 3: Cumulative number of hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths among lab-confirmed influenza positive patients, 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia<sup>8</sup>**

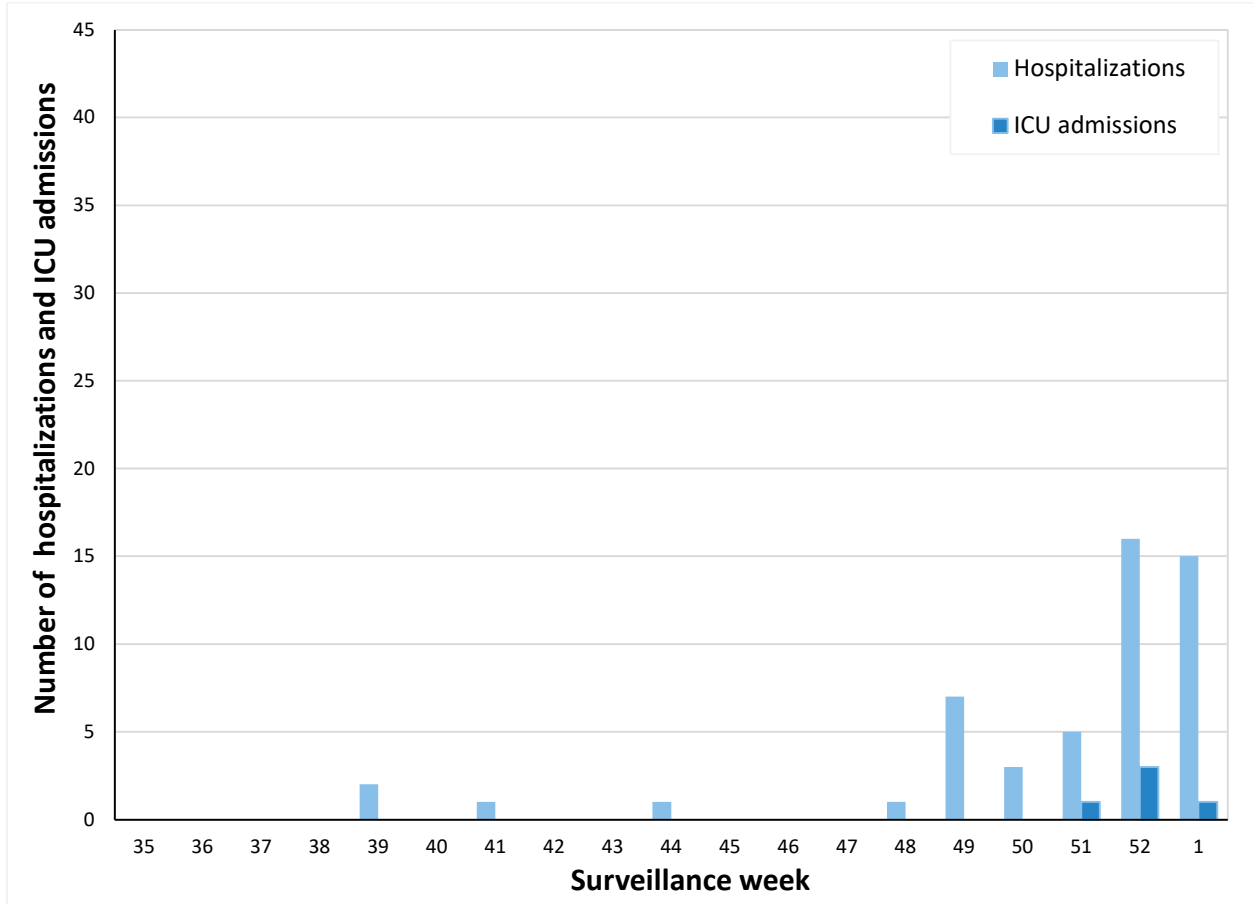
| Age group (years)        | Cumulative (2024/25) |          |          |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------|----------|
|                          | Hospitalizations     | ICU      | Deaths   |
| 0-4                      | 5                    | 0        | 0        |
| 5-19                     | 5                    | 0        | 0        |
| 20-44                    | 2                    | 0        | 0        |
| 45-64                    | 14                   | 1        | 0        |
| ≥ 65                     | 25                   | 4        | 2        |
| <b>Nova Scotia Total</b> | <b>51</b>            | <b>5</b> | <b>2</b> |

<sup>7</sup> Local public health continuously enters and updates influenza case data. Counts may differ from previous surveillance weeks.

<sup>8</sup> Individuals may be included in multiple columns if they have more than one severe outcome (i.e., categories are not mutually exclusive). Recent hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths may be undercounted due to delays in reporting.

Week 1 (December 29, 2024 to January 4, 2025)

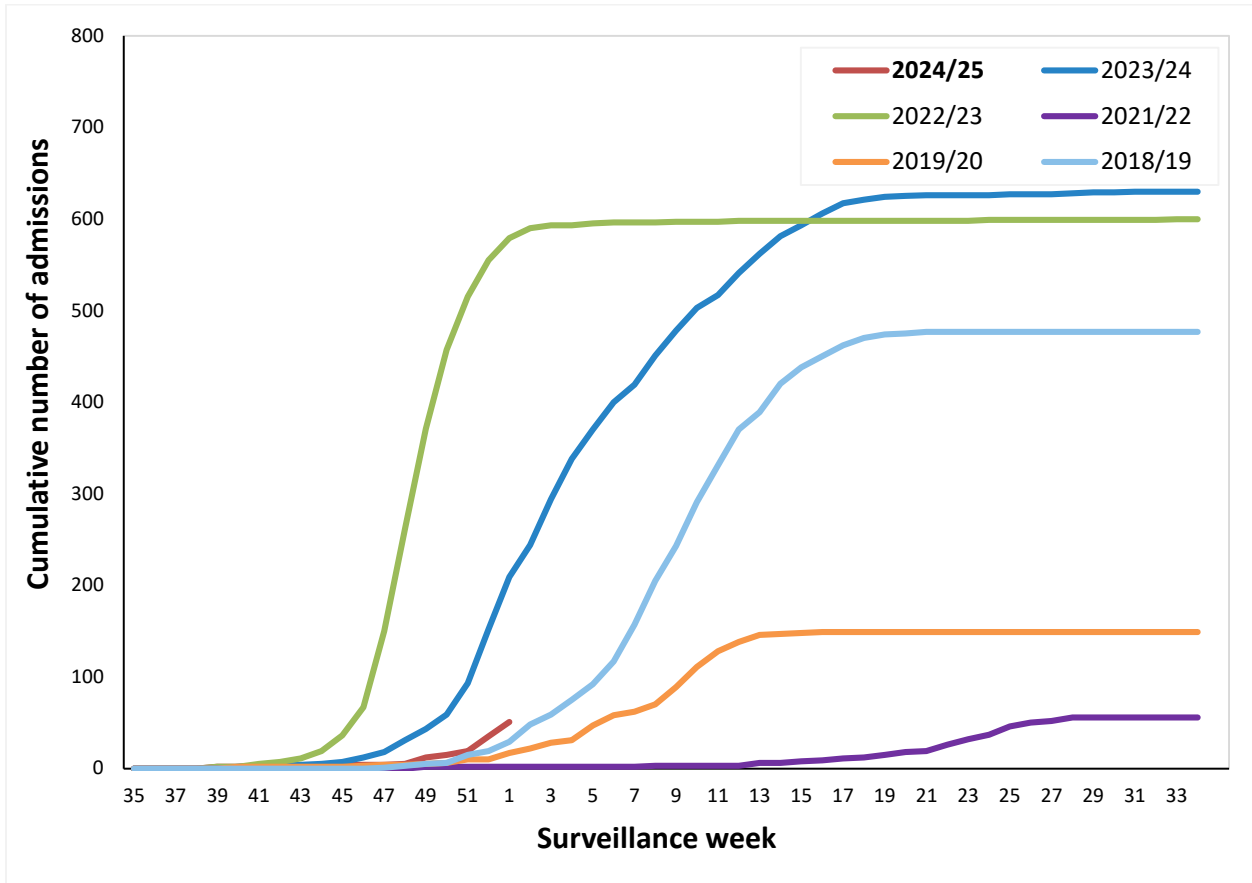
Figure 2: Number of influenza hospitalizations and ICU admissions by surveillance week, 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia<sup>9</sup>



<sup>9</sup> Cases who are hospitalized and admitted to the ICU in the same surveillance week will be included in both the hospitalization and ICU counts for that surveillance week. Recent hospitalizations and ICU admissions may be undercounted due to delays in reporting.

Week 1 (December 29, 2024 to January 4, 2025)

Figure 3: Cumulative number of hospitalizations and ICU admissions for influenza by surveillance week, 2024/25 season compared with previous seasons, Nova Scotia<sup>10</sup>



<sup>10</sup> Figure 3 presents the cumulative number of cases who were admitted to hospital and/or ICU during the season. Cases are counted once. There were no reported cases of influenza during the 2020-2021 season.

COVID-19

Figure 4: Number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases (N=3061) and percent positivity, 2024/25 season, compared with previous seasons, Nova Scotia

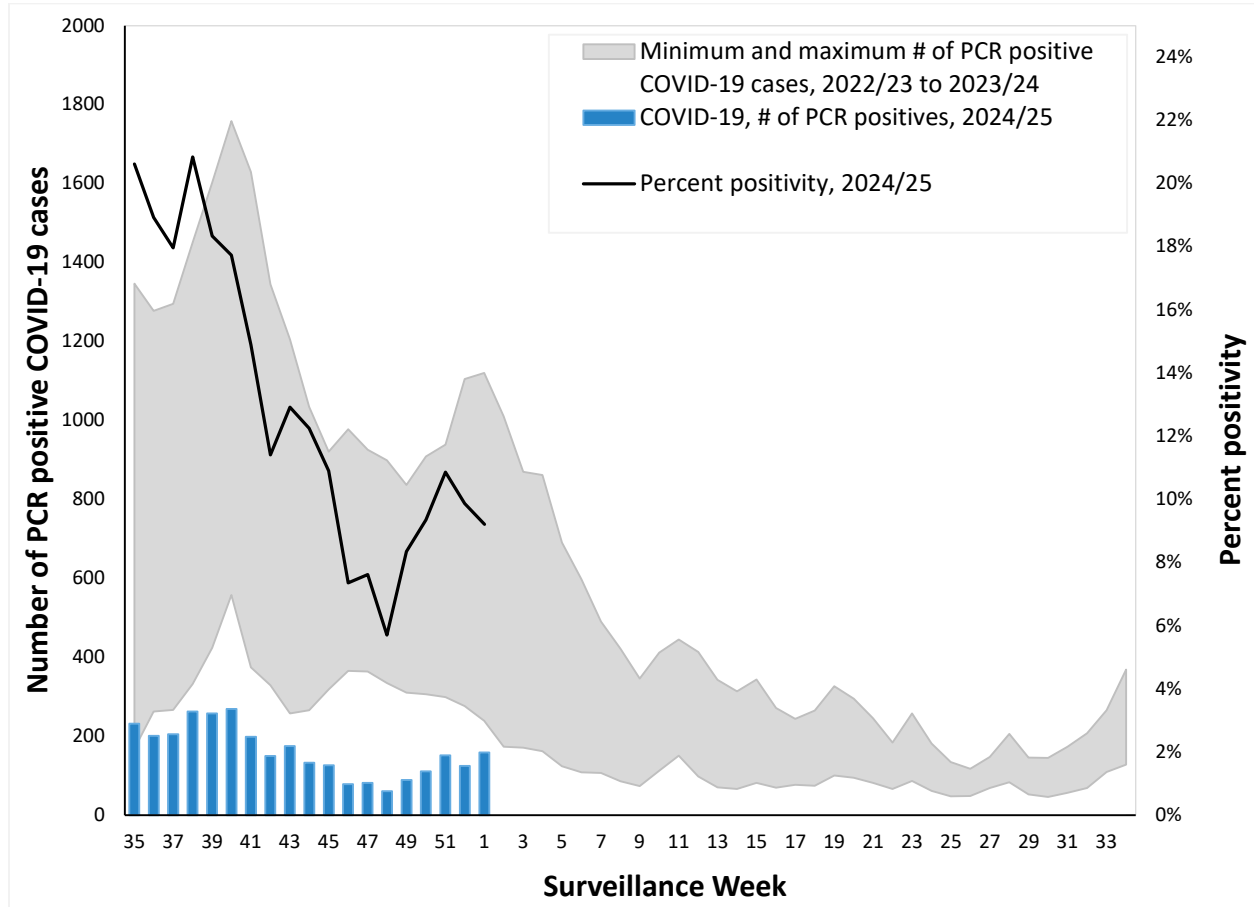


Table 4: Number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases during current reporting period and cumulative 2024/25 season, by zone, Nova Scotia<sup>11</sup>

| Zone                     | Current reporting period | Cumulative (2024/25) |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Western                  | 35                       | 653                  |
| Northern                 | 35                       | 719                  |
| Eastern                  | 31                       | 536                  |
| Central                  | 57                       | 1153                 |
| <b>Nova Scotia Total</b> | <b>158</b>               | <b>3061</b>          |

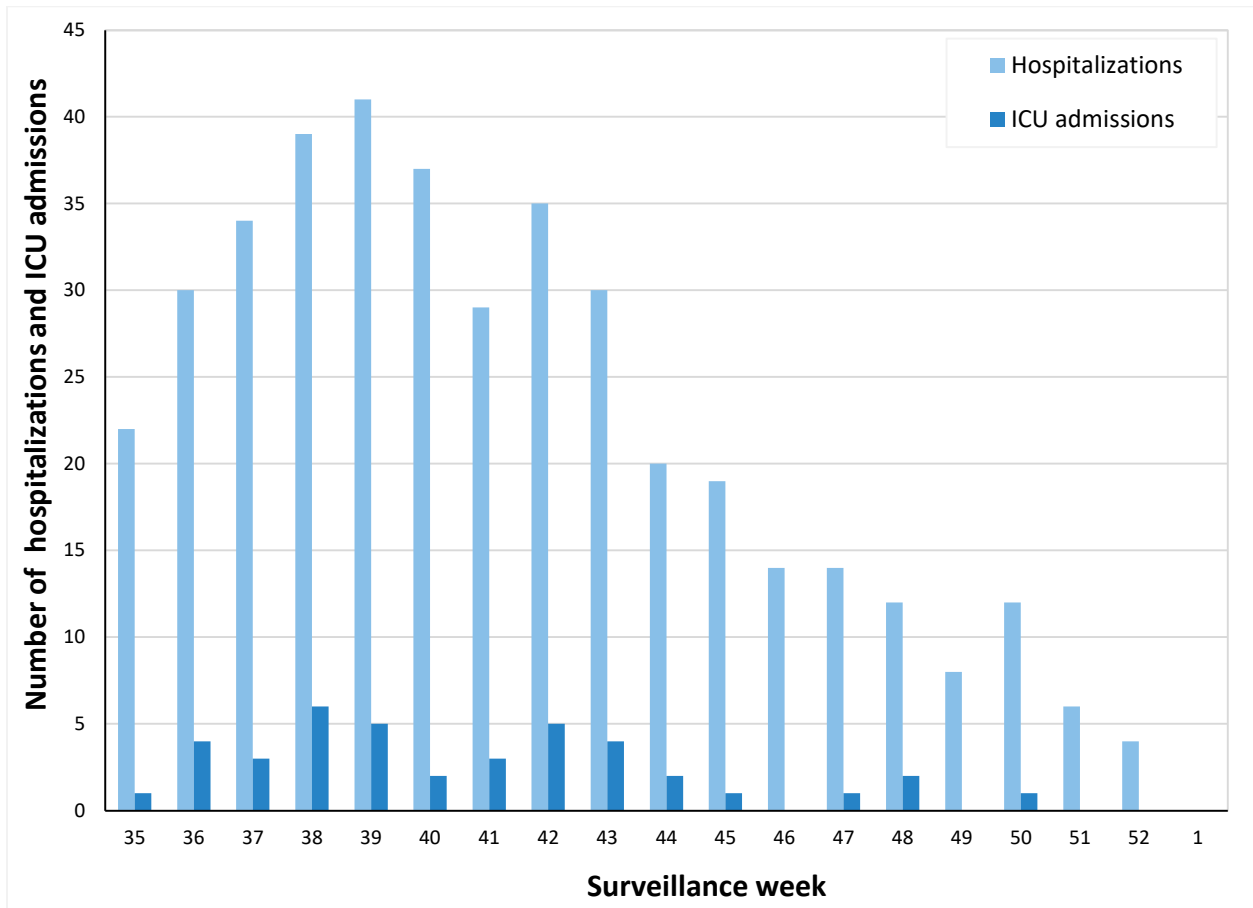
<sup>11</sup> Local public health continuously enters and updates COVID-19 case data. Counts may differ from previous surveillance weeks.

Week 1 (December 29, 2024 to January 4, 2025)

Table 5. Number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases during current reporting period and cumulative 2024/25 season, by age group, Nova Scotia<sup>12</sup>

| Age group (years)        | Current reporting period | Cumulative (2024/25) |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 0-4                      | 5                        | 59                   |
| 5-19                     | 3                        | 66                   |
| 20-44                    | 26                       | 346                  |
| 45-64                    | 20                       | 493                  |
| ≥ 65                     | 104                      | 2097                 |
| <b>Nova Scotia Total</b> | <b>158</b>               | <b>3061</b>          |

Figure 5: Number of COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions by week, 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia<sup>13</sup>



<sup>12</sup> Local public health continuously enters and updates COVID-19 case data. Counts may differ from previous surveillance weeks.

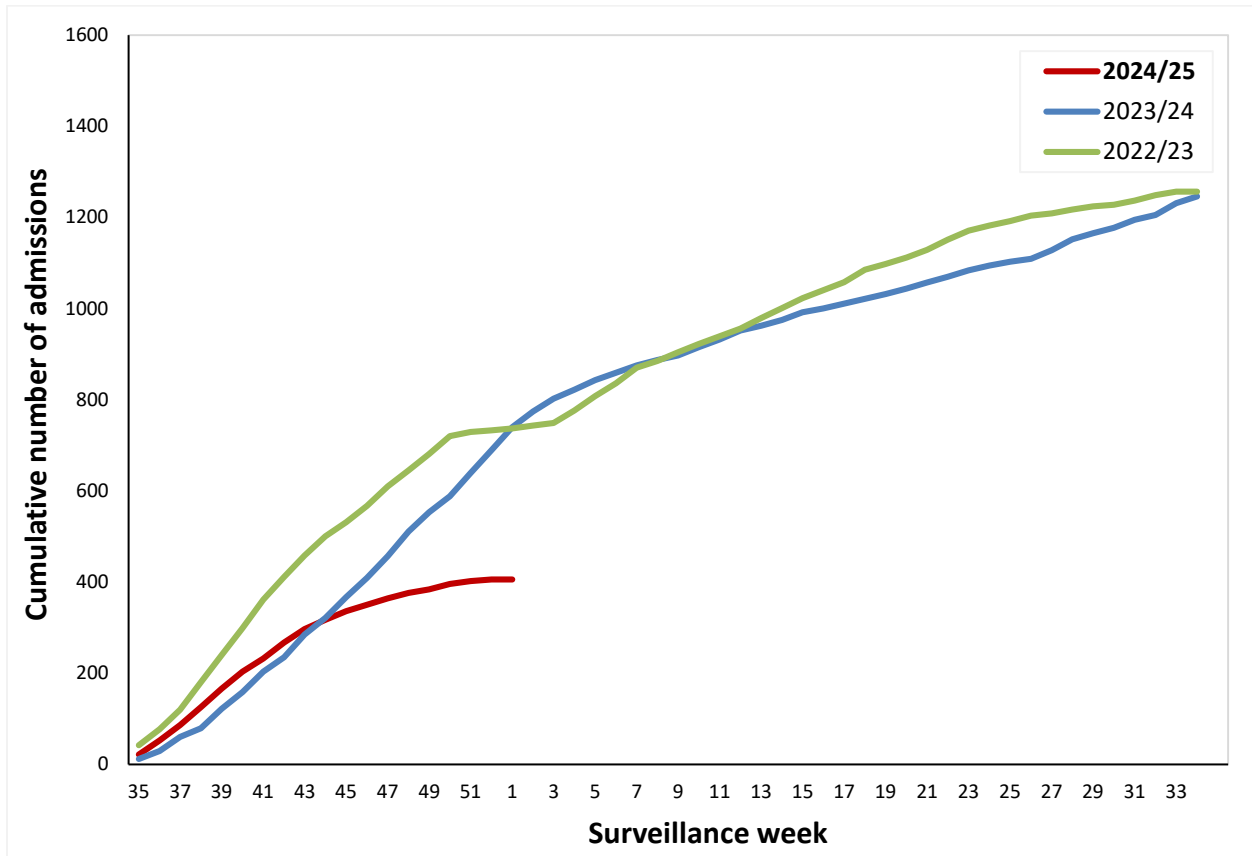
<sup>13</sup> Cases who are hospitalized and admitted to the ICU in the same surveillance week will be included in both the hospitalization and ICU counts for that surveillance week. Recent hospitalizations and ICU admissions may be undercounted due to delays in reporting.

Week 1 (December 29, 2024 to January 4, 2025)

Table 6: Cumulative number of hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths among COVID-19 positive patients, 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia<sup>14</sup>

| Age group (years)        | Cumulative (2024/25) |                |           |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------|-----------|
|                          | Hospitalizations     | ICU admissions | Deaths    |
| 0-4                      | 4                    | 0              | 0         |
| 5-19                     | 1                    | 0              | 0         |
| 20-44                    | 10                   | 0              | 0         |
| 45-64                    | 39                   | 11             | 4         |
| ≥ 65                     | 352                  | 29             | 40        |
| <b>Nova Scotia Total</b> | <b>406</b>           | <b>40</b>      | <b>44</b> |

Figure 6: Cumulative number of COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions, by surveillance week, 2024/25 season compared with previous seasons, Nova Scotia<sup>15</sup>



<sup>14</sup> Cases can have more than one severe outcome (e.g., be hospitalized and then admitted to the ICU); therefore, cases may be counted multiple times if they have more than one severe outcome (i.e., categories are not mutually exclusive). Recent hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths may be undercounted due to delays in reporting

<sup>15</sup> Figure 6 presents the cumulative number of cases who were admitted to hospital and/or ICU during the season. Cases are counted once.

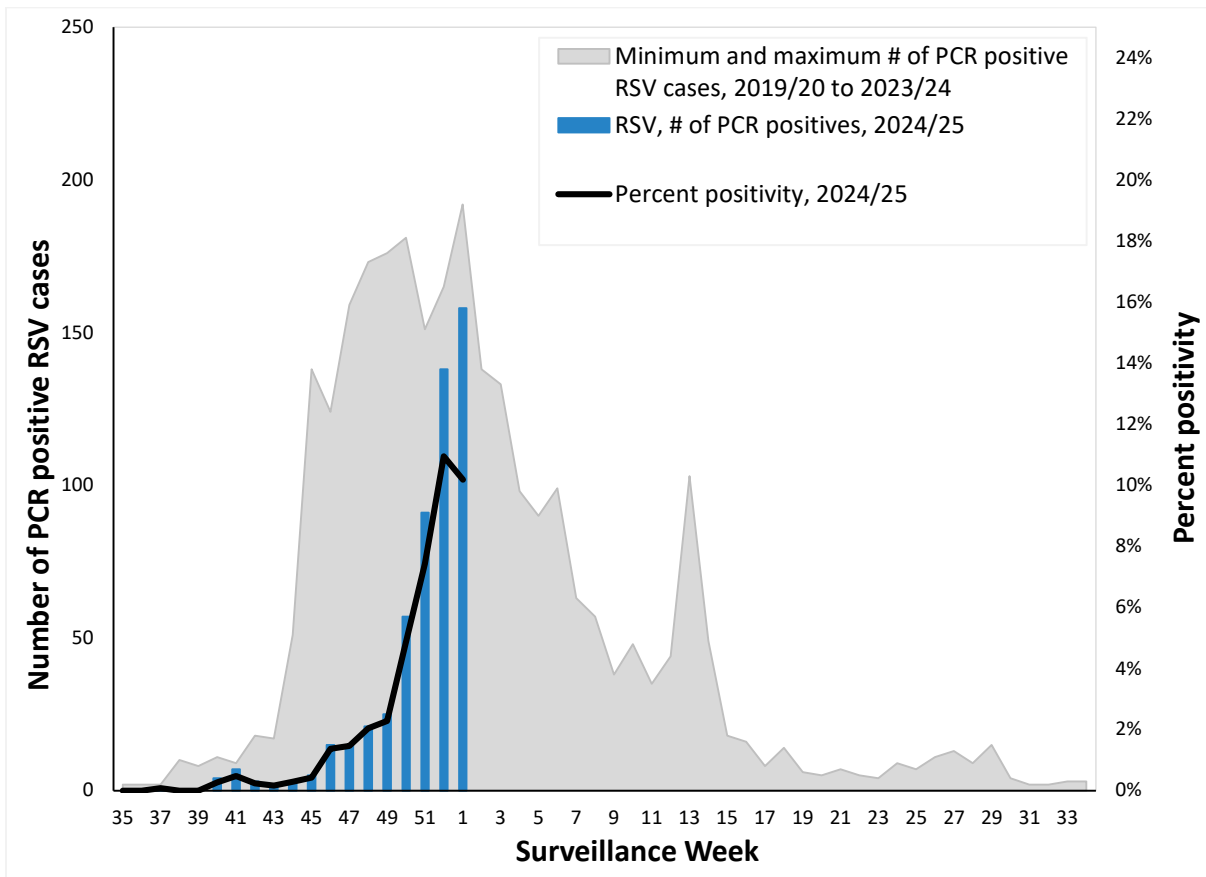


**RSV Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)<sup>16</sup>**

**Table 7: Number of laboratory-confirmed RSV cases by age group, current reporting period and cumulative 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia**

| Age group                | Current reporting period | Cumulative (2024/25) |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 0-5 months               | 26                       | 69                   |
| 6-11 months              | 18                       | 46                   |
| 12-23 months             | 10                       | 82                   |
| 2-4 years                | 17                       | 104                  |
| 5-19 years               | 10                       | 45                   |
| 20-64 years              | 29                       | 78                   |
| ≥ 65 years               | 48                       | 121                  |
| <b>Nova Scotia Total</b> | <b>158</b>               | <b>545</b>           |

**Figure 7: Laboratory-confirmed RSV cases (N=545) by week, 2024/25 season, compared with previous seasons, Nova Scotia<sup>17</sup>**

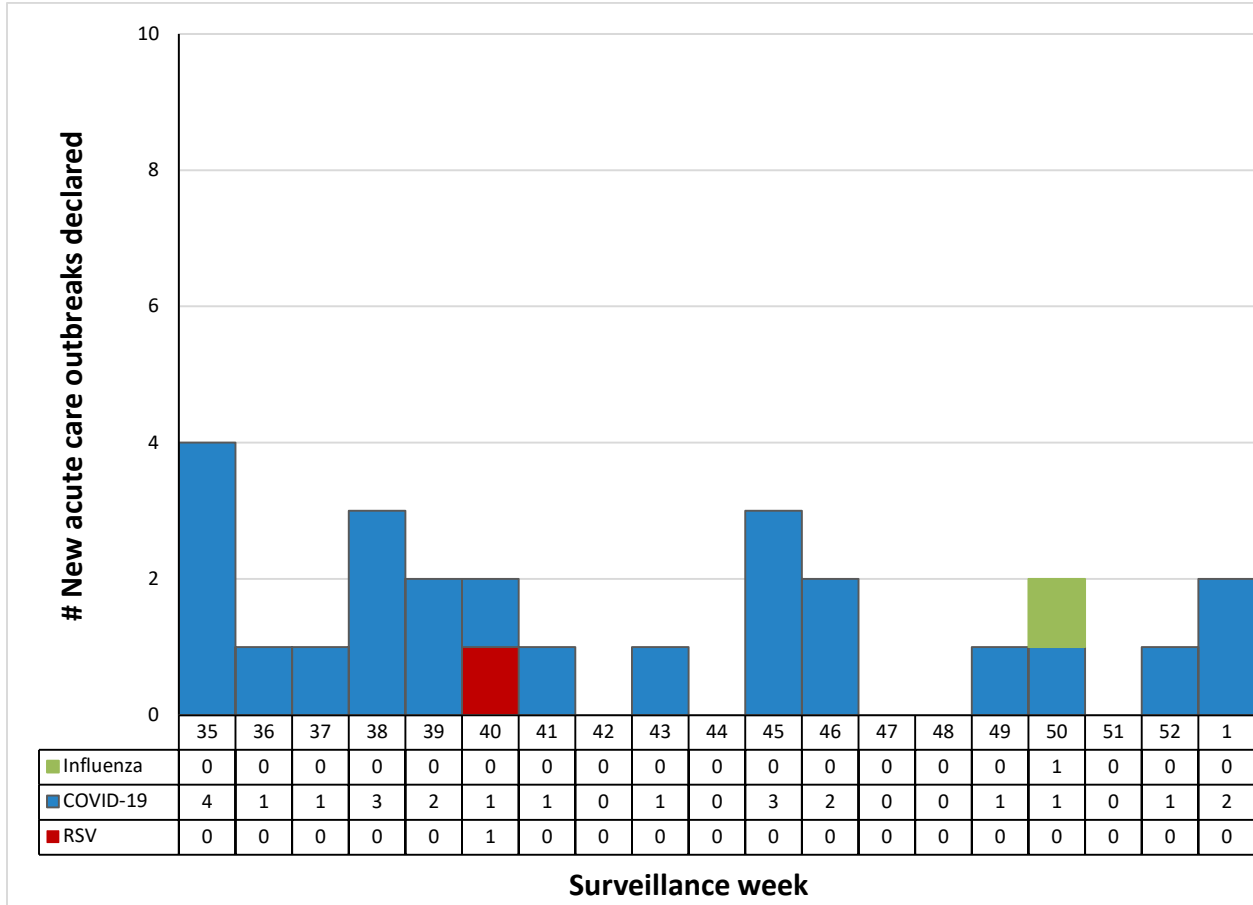


<sup>16</sup> RSV is not a notifiable condition in Nova Scotia. Counts may differ from previous surveillance weeks because of reporting delays.

<sup>17</sup> There were no reported RSV cases during the 2020-2021 season. The implementation of the multiplex respiratory virus PCR testing in 2022/23 may increase the number of cases detected.

## Respiratory Outbreaks

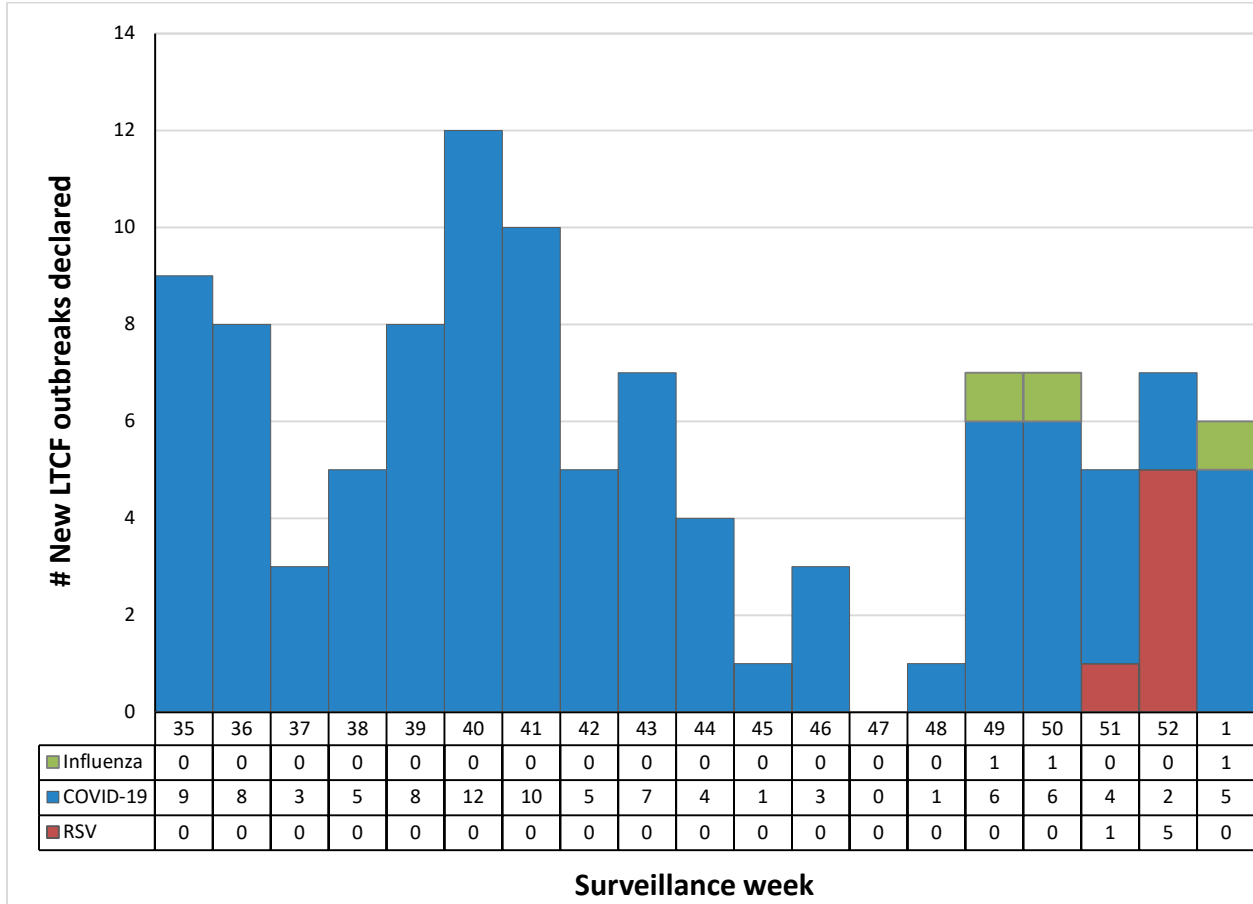
Figure 8. Number of new acute care facility respiratory outbreaks by surveillance week and respiratory virus (influenza, COVID-19 and RSV), 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia<sup>18</sup>



<sup>18</sup> Acute care facility outbreak definitions are described in the Appendix. Local public health continuously enters and updates outbreak data. Counts may differ from previous surveillance weeks.

Week 1 (December 29, 2024 to January 4, 2025)

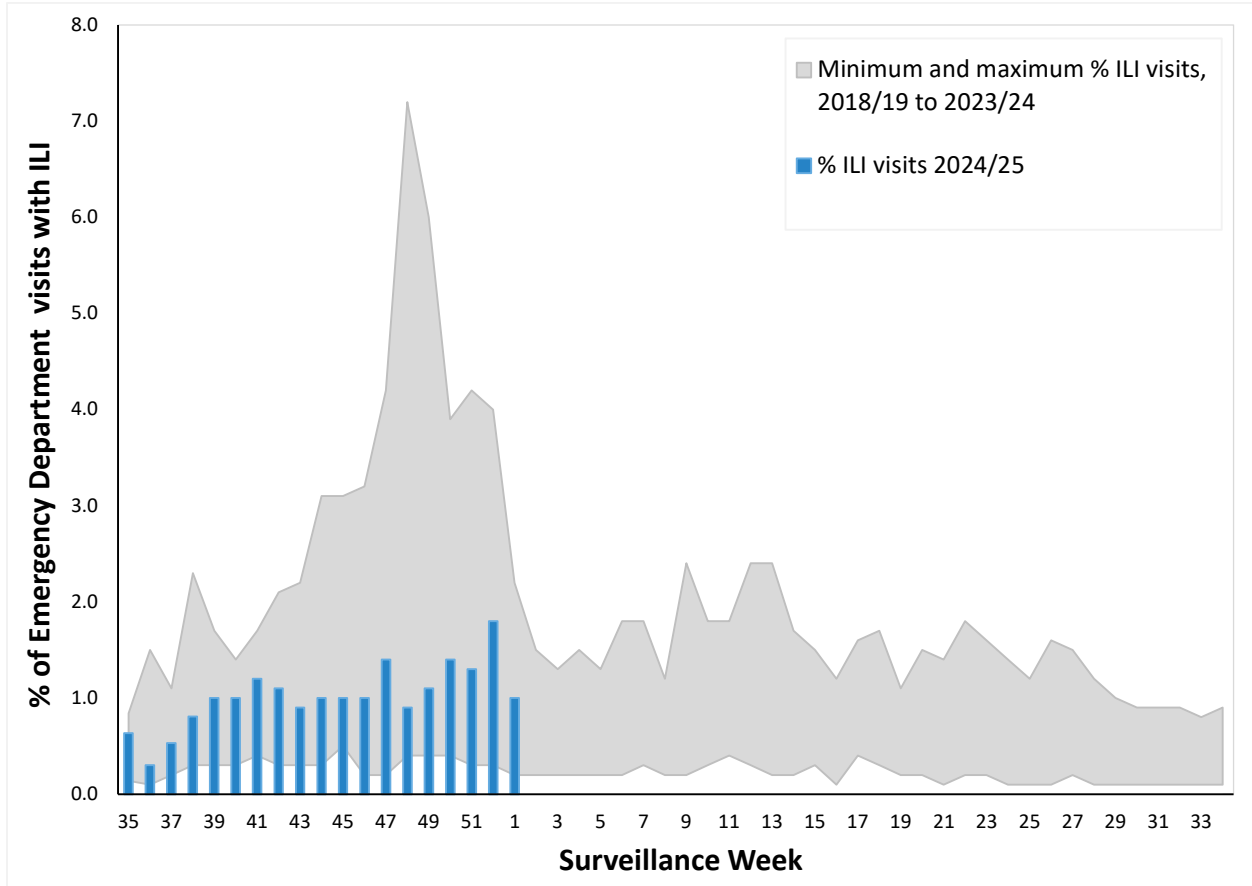
Figure 9. Number of new long-term care facility (LTCF) respiratory outbreaks by surveillance week and respiratory virus (influenza, COVID-19 and RSV), 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia<sup>19</sup>



<sup>19</sup> LTCF outbreak definitions are described in the Appendix. Local public health continuously enters and updates outbreak data. Counts may differ from previous surveillance weeks.

## Syndromic Surveillance

Figure 10: Percentage of emergency department visits due to influenza-like illness (ILI) by surveillance week, 2024/25 season, compared with previous seasons, Nova Scotia<sup>20</sup>



## Other Respiratory Illness

Table 8: Number of positive specimens for other respiratory viruses, current reporting period and cumulative 2024/25 season, Nova Scotia<sup>21</sup>

| PATHOGEN               | Current reporting period | Cumulative (2024/25) |
|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Adenovirus             | 2                        | 26                   |
| Bocavirus              | 0                        | 1                    |
| Coronavirus*           | 7                        | 22                   |
| Enterovirus/Rhinovirus | 7                        | 227                  |
| Metapneumovirus        | 0                        | 0                    |
| Parainfluenza          | 4                        | 18                   |

\*Excludes COVID-19

<sup>20</sup> ILI percentages may be updated due to delays in reporting, as some acute care facilities may submit data retrospectively.

<sup>21</sup> Counts may differ from previous weeks because of delays in reporting.

## Appendix – data notes and definitions

### Data Notes

- A surveillance week runs from Sunday to Saturday. Nova Scotia’s 2024/25 season aligns with the [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\) FluWatch surveillance weeks](#).
  - This year runs from August 25, 2024 (Week 35) to August 29, 2025 (Week 34).
- Notifications of hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths may lag by several weeks, and deaths are particularly affected. Additionally, data are incomplete for the most recent reporting period because local public health report COVID-19 and influenza outcomes. Figures presenting outcomes by week do not include data for the most recent surveillance week.
- Definitions for hospitalizations and deaths related to each of COVID-19 and influenza were changed in August 2024. These case definitions are found in the [Surveillance guidelines](#).
- RSV is not a notifiable disease in Nova Scotia.
- Testing eligibility guidelines and the use of multiplex PCR testing affect the number of cases identified and reported.
  - A multiplex PCR tests for multiple respiratory pathogens simultaneously. Routine multiplex PCR tests include, but is not limited to, influenza, RSV, and COVID-19. See [Nova Scotia’s Respiratory Surveillance Plan](#) for a full list of what is tested.
  - In the 2022-2023 season, access to multiplex PCR testing in Nova Scotia increased testing accessibility which likely increased detection in community influenza and RSV.
  - Testing is limited to [specific populations](#) and the counts reported in this report under-represent the actual number of cases in the community.

### Definitions used in respiratory surveillance, and useful links, 2024/25

See: [Nova Scotia’s Respiratory Response Plan](#) and [Nova Scotia’s Respiratory Surveillance Plan for Public Health](#)

### Acronyms

|             |                             |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>ICU</b>  | Intensive care unit         |
| <b>ILI</b>  | Influenza-like illness      |
| <b>RSV</b>  | Respiratory syncytial virus |
| <b>PCR</b>  | Polymerase chain reaction   |
| <b>LTCF</b> | Long term care facilities   |

### Outbreak Definitions

| Pathogen  | Acute care facility  | Long-term care facility (LTCF)  |
|-----------|--|---|
| Influenza | ≥ 2 symptomatic residents where at least one is a laboratory confirmed case of influenza, epidemiologically linked within the patient care unit in a <b>7-day period</b> | ≥ 2 resident cases of ILI (influenza-like illness), where at least one is a laboratory confirmed case of influenza, within the LTCF in a <b>7-day period</b>            |
| COVID-19  | ≥ 2 symptomatic residents where at least one is a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19, epidemiologically linked within the patient care unit in a <b>10-day period</b> | ≥ 2 laboratory-confirmed resident cases AND at least one is a facility acquired case, with all cases epidemiologically linked within the LTCF in a <b>10-day period</b> |

## Week 1 (December 29, 2024 to January 4, 2025)

|                                   |  |   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) | ≥ 2 symptomatic residents where at least one is a laboratory confirmed case of RSV, epidemiologically linked within the patient care unit in a <b>7-day period</b> | ≥ 2 symptomatic residents where at least one is a laboratory confirmed case of RSV, epidemiologically linked within the LTCF in a <b>7-day period</b> |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|

### ILI Case Definition

Acute onset of respiratory illness with fever and cough and with one or more of the following – sore throat, arthralgia, myalgia or prostration which is likely due to influenza. In children under 5, gastrointestinal symptoms may also be present. In patients < 5 or ≥ 65 years, fever may not be prominent.

### Other case definitions

See: [Surveillance Guidelines | novascotia.ca](#)

### Links to other weekly influenza reports

Canada: [Weekly influenza reports - Canada.ca](#)  
World: [Global Influenza Programme \(who.int\)](#)  
US: [FluView | FluView | CDC](#)