RESPIRATORY WATCH

Week 8 (February 18, 2024 to February 24, 2024)

Highlights[1]

The 2023-2024 season runs from August 27, 2023 to August 24, 2024

Activity levels

- The number of influenza PCR positives is similar to last week and has been declining after peaking in week 4.
- The number of COVID-19 PCR positives is declining since peaking in week 47 and remains lower than during the same time period in 2022/23.
  The number of RSV PCR positives remain stable compared to the last two weeks but has decreased since the peak in week 2.

Laboratory-confirmed cases

- Influenza:
  - There were 121 new cases of Influenza A, and 10 new cases of Influenza B reported during week 8; there have been 1975 cases of Influenza A and 178 cases of Influenza B reported since the start of the 2023-2024 season.
- COVID-19:
  - There were 86 new cases of COVID-19 reported during week 8; there have been 7036 laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19 since the start of the 2023-2024 season.
- RSV:
  - There were 32 new cases of RSV reported during week 8; there have been 1257 laboratory confirmed cases of RSV since the start of the 2023-2024 season.

Severity

- Influenza:
  - During the 2023-2024 season there have been:
    - 362 hospitalizations (non-ICU)
    - 29 ICU admissions
    - 43 deaths
- COVID-19:
  - During the 2023-2024 season there have been:
    - 710 hospitalizations (non-ICU)
    - 74 ICU admissions
    - 150 deaths

Outbreaks

- There were 6 new long term care facility outbreaks declared in this reporting period:
  - 3 influenza
  - 1 COVID-19
  - 2 RSV

Syndromic surveillance

- The percentage of emergency department visits for influenza like illness (ILI) was 0.6% during this reporting period.

[1] See Appendix for data notes.

INFLUENZA

Figure 1: Laboratory-confirmed influenza cases by week (N=2153), 2023-2024 season, with comparison to previous seasons, Nova Scotia[2]

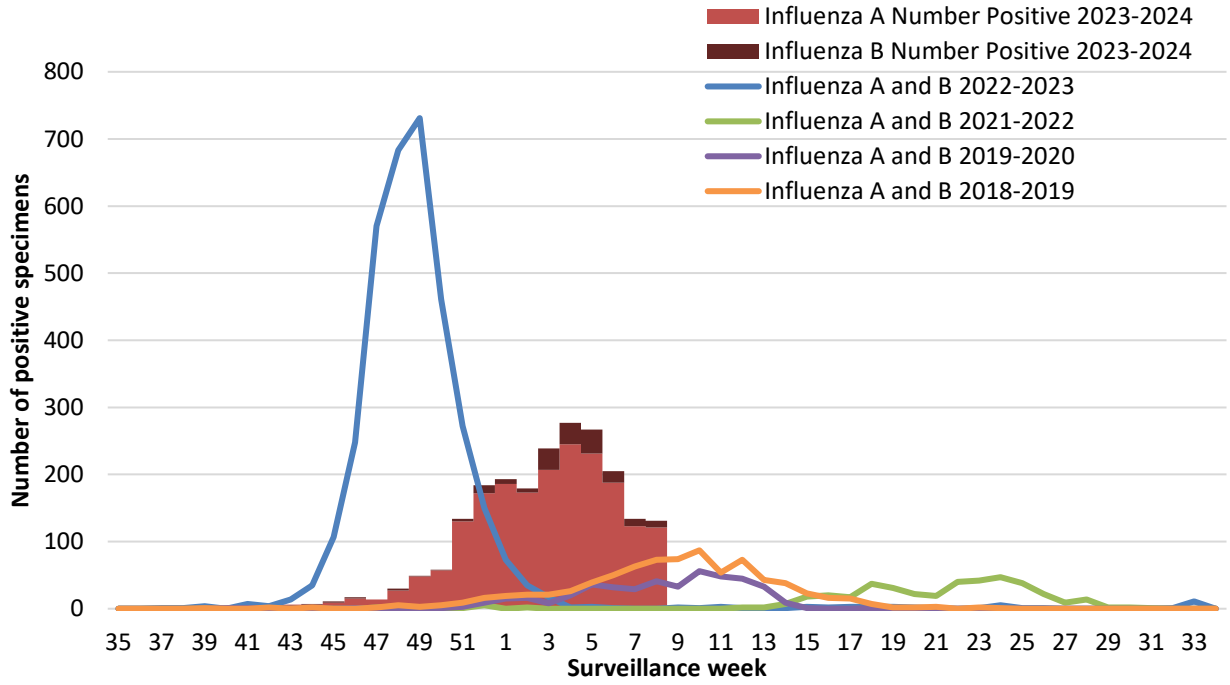


Table 1: Number of laboratory-confirmed influenza cases by zone, current reporting period and cumulative 2023-2024 season, Nova Scotia[3]

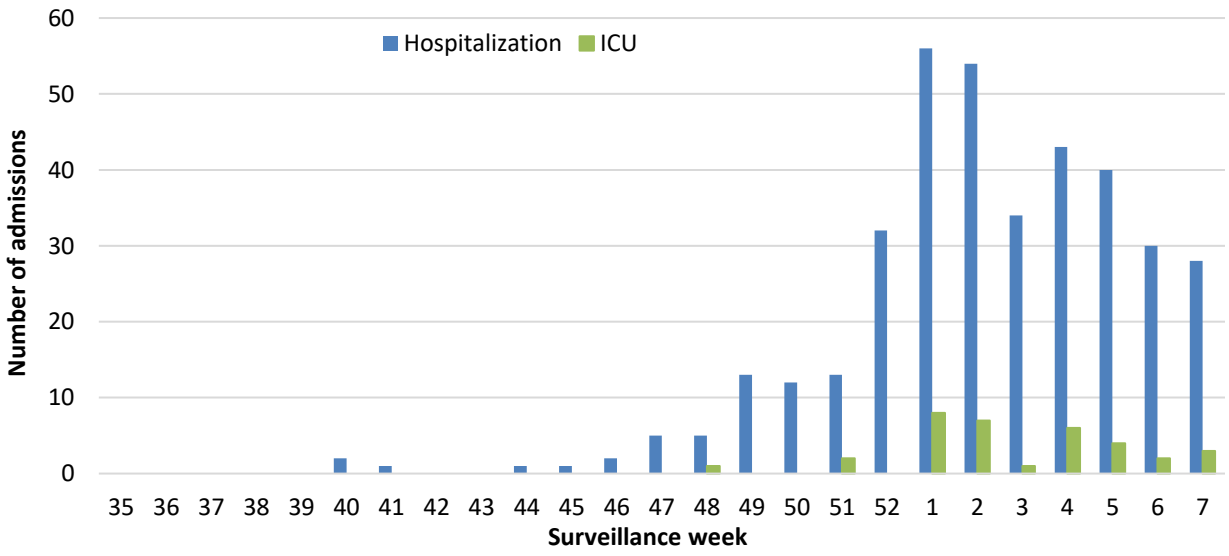
ZONE	CURRENT PERIOD			CUMULATIVE 2023-2024		
	INFLUENZA A	INFLUENZA B	TOTAL	INFLUENZA A	INFLUENZA B	TOTAL
Western	52	1	**53**	334	23	**357**
Northern	23	1	**24**	620	21	**641**
Eastern	9	7	**16**	456	123	**579**
Central	37	1	**38**	565	11	**576**
Nova Scotia Total	**121**	**10**	**131**	**1975**	**178**	**2153**

[2] There were no reported influenza cases during the 2020-2021 season.
[3] Influenza case data are continuously entered and cleaned. Past-week data may be modified.

Table 2: Number of laboratory-confirmed influenza cases by age group, current reporting period and cumulative 2023-2024 season, Nova Scotia

AGE (YEARS)	CURRENT PERIOD			CUMULATIVE 2023-2024		
	INFLUENZA A	INFLUENZA B	TOTAL	INFLUENZA A	INFLUENZA B	TOTAL
0-4	8	0	**8**	219	20	**239**
5-19	17	3	**20**	241	80	**321**
20-44	16	5	**21**	362	58	**420**
45-64	39	1	**40**	467	13	**480**
65+	41	1	**42**	686	7	**693**
Nova Scotia Total	**121**	**10**	**131**	**1975**	**178**	**2153**

Figure 2. Number of influenza hospitalizations and ICU admissions by week, 2023-2024 season, Nova Scotia[4]

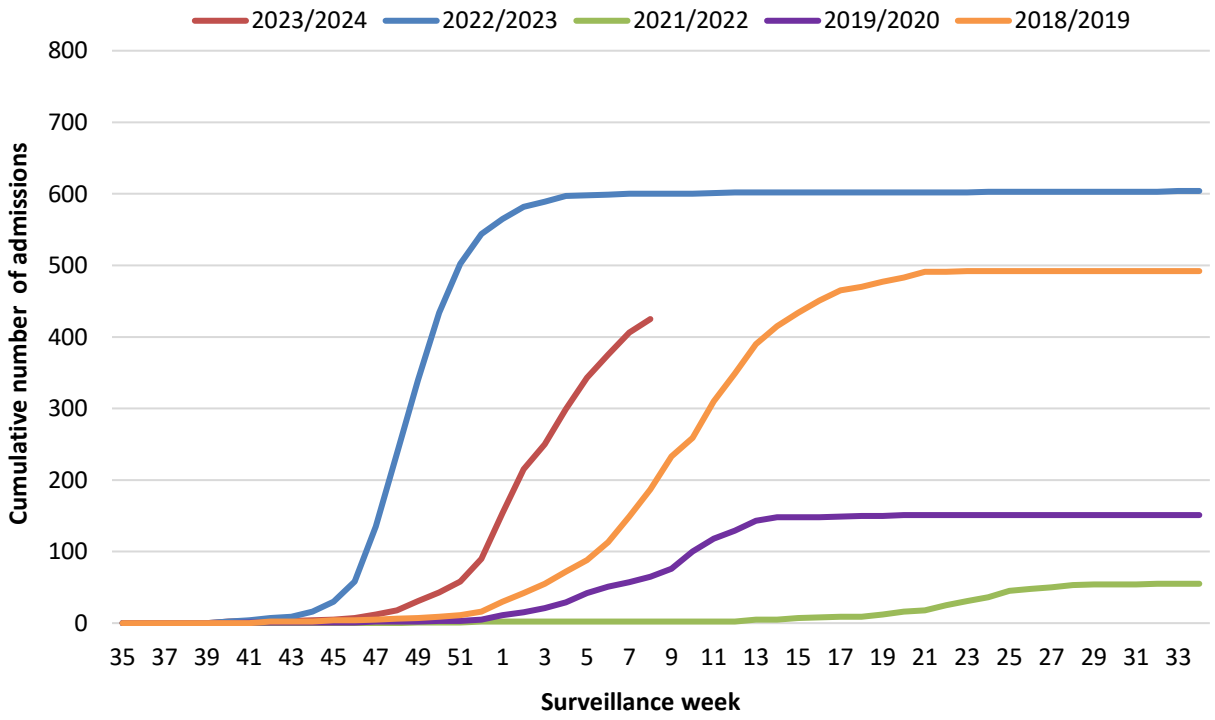


[4] Due to influenza outcome reporting cycles, a data delay prevents reporting on the most recent surveillance week. If a case is hospitalized and moves to ICU in the same reporting week, they will appear in both the hospitalization and ICU columns for that week.

Table 3: Hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths for influenza positive patients, based on most severe outcome, cumulative counts, 2023-2024 season, Nova Scotia[5]

AGE (years)	CUMULATIVE 2023-2024		
	Hospitalizations	ICU	Deaths
0-4	29	0	0
5-19	25	0	0
20-44	30	5	1
45-64	88	10	4
65+	190	14	38
Nova Scotia Total	**362**	**29**	**43**

Figure 3: Cumulative influenza hospitalizations and ICU admissions, by week, 2023-24 season compared to prior seasons, Nova Scotia[6]



[5] In this table, only the most severe outcome for a case is included; numbers of hospitalizations and ICU admissions could therefore decline over time, if a person counted in one of those columns moves to a more severe outcome. Influenza outcome data are continuously entered and cleaned. Past-week data may be modified.

[6] A case can have more than one outcome (e.g., be hospitalized, and later move to the ICU); multiple outcomes per case are counted in graphs showing outcomes by week, where applicable. There were no reported cases of influenza during the 2020-2021 season.

COVID-19

Figure 4: Laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases by week (N=7036), 2023-2024 season, with comparison to previous season, Nova Scotia

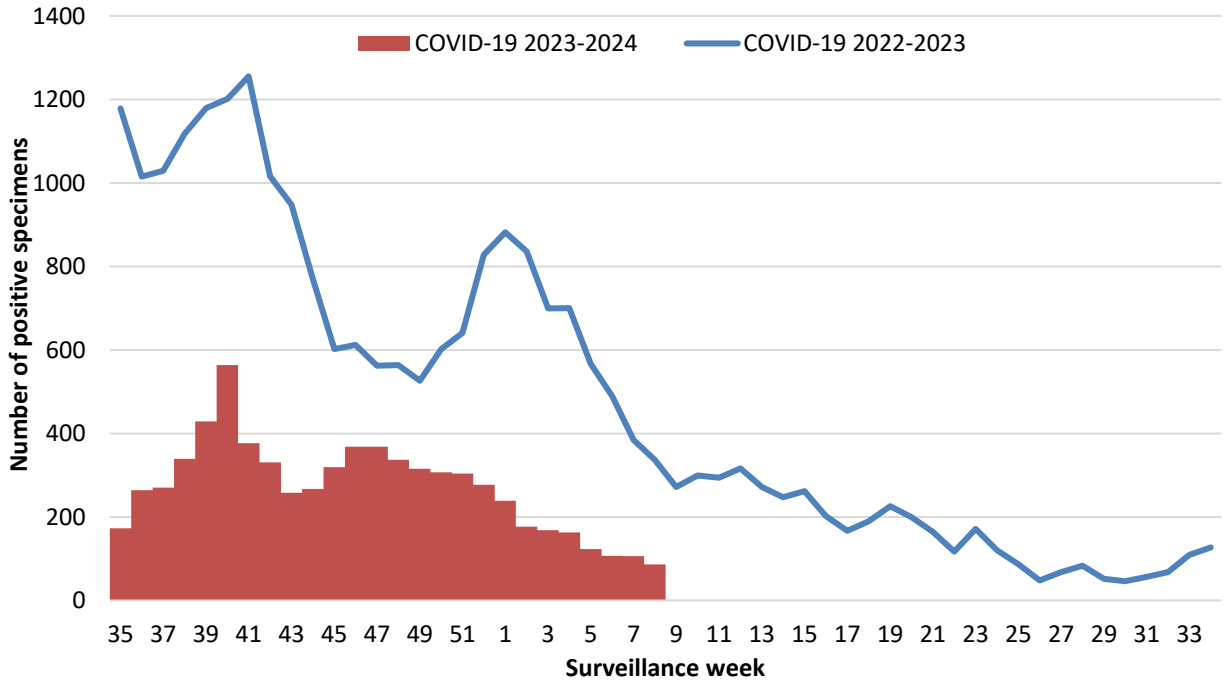


Table 4: Number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases by zone, current period and cumulative 2023-2024 season, Nova Scotia[7]

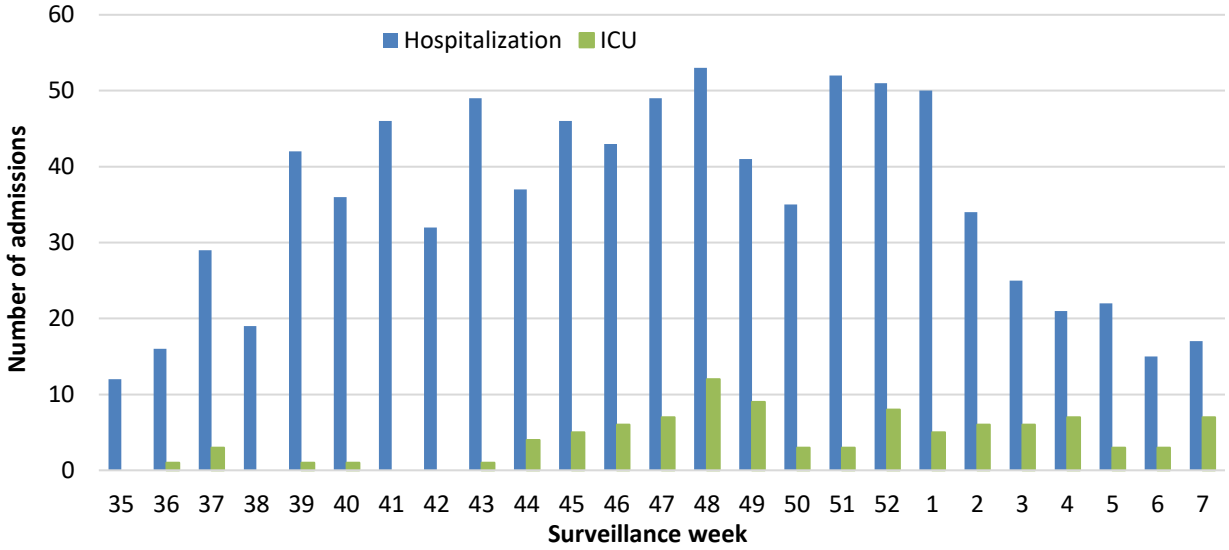
ZONE	CURRENT PERIOD	CUMULATIVE 2023-2024
Western	10	1560
Northern	35	1382
Eastern	2	1153
Central	39	2941
Nova Scotia Total	**86**	**7036**

[7] COVID-19 case data are continuously entered and cleaned. Data from prior weeks may be modified.

Table 5. Number of laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases by age group, current period and cumulative 2023-2024 season, Nova Scotia

AGE (YEARS)	CURRENT PERIOD	CUMULATIVE 2023-2024
0-4	4	122
5-19	2	104
20-44	15	1080
45-64	16	1541
65+	49	4189
Nova Scotia Total	**86**	**7036**

Figure 5: Number of COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions by week, 2023-2024 season, Nova Scotia[8]

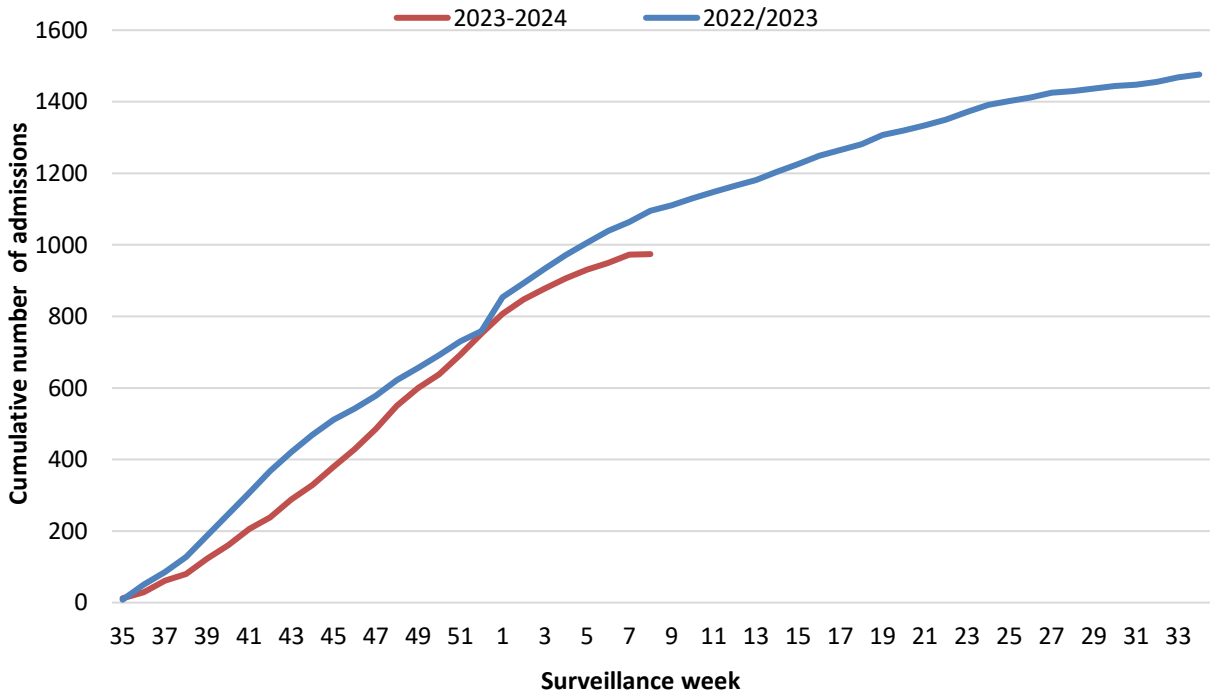


[8] Due to COVID-19 outcome reporting cycles, a data delay prevents reporting on the most recent surveillance week. If a case is hospitalized and moves to ICU in the same reporting week, they will appear in both the hospitalization and ICU columns for that week.

Table 6: Hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths for COVID-19 positive patients, cumulative counts, 2023-2024 season, Nova Scotia[9]

AGE (years)	CUMULATIVE 2023-2024		
	Hospitalizations	ICU	Deaths
0-4	7	0	0
5-19	7	0	0
20-44	21	7	2
45-64	85	21	4
65+	590	46	144
Nova Scotia Total	**710**	**74**	**150**

Figure 6: Cumulative COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions, by week, 2023-24 season compared to prior seasons, Nova Scotia[10]



[9] In this table, only the most severe outcome for a case is included; numbers of hospitalizations and ICU admissions could therefore decline over time, if a person counted in one of those columns moves to a more severe outcome. COVID-19 outcome data are continuously entered and cleaned. Data from prior weeks may be modified.

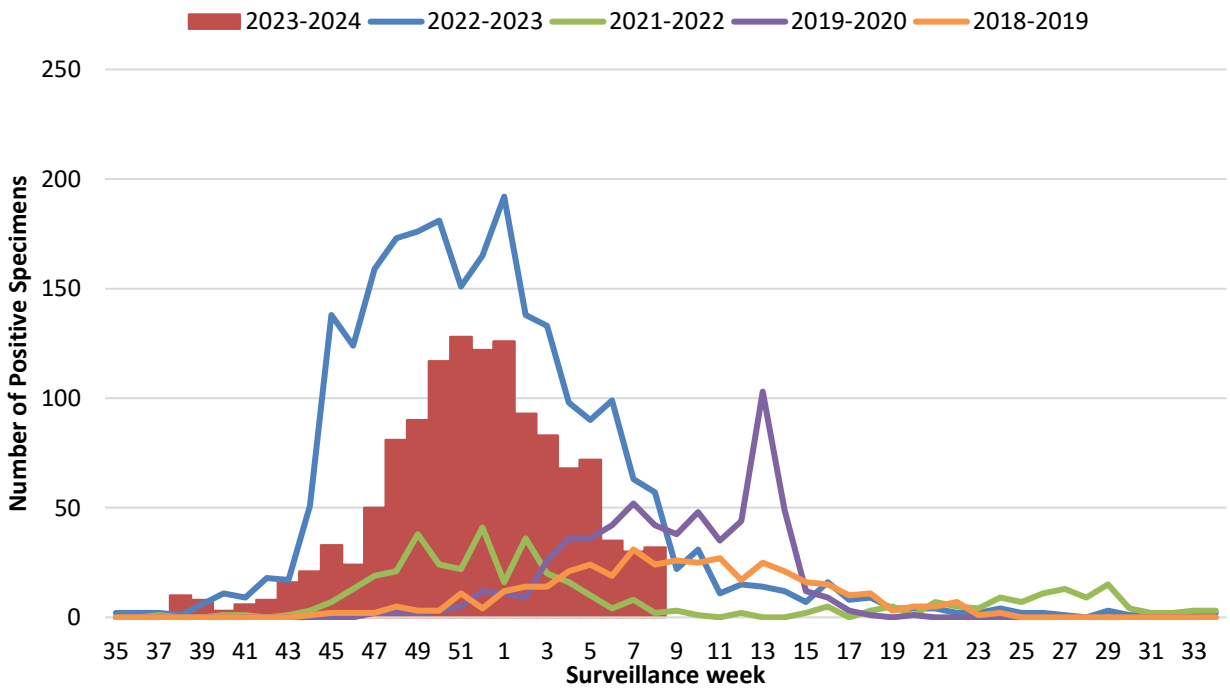
[10] A case can have more than one outcome (e.g., be hospitalized, and later move to the ICU); multiple outcomes per case are counted in graphs showing outcomes by week, where applicable.

RSV

Table 7: Number of laboratory-confirmed RSV cases by age group, current reporting period and cumulative 2023-2024 season, Nova Scotia

AGE (YEARS)	CURRENT PERIOD	CUMULATIVE 2023-2024
0-5 months	1	229
6-11 months	1	73
12-23 months	4	134
2-4 years	3	215
5-19 years	1	82
20-64 years	7	163
65+ years	15	361
Nova Scotia Total	**32**	**1257**

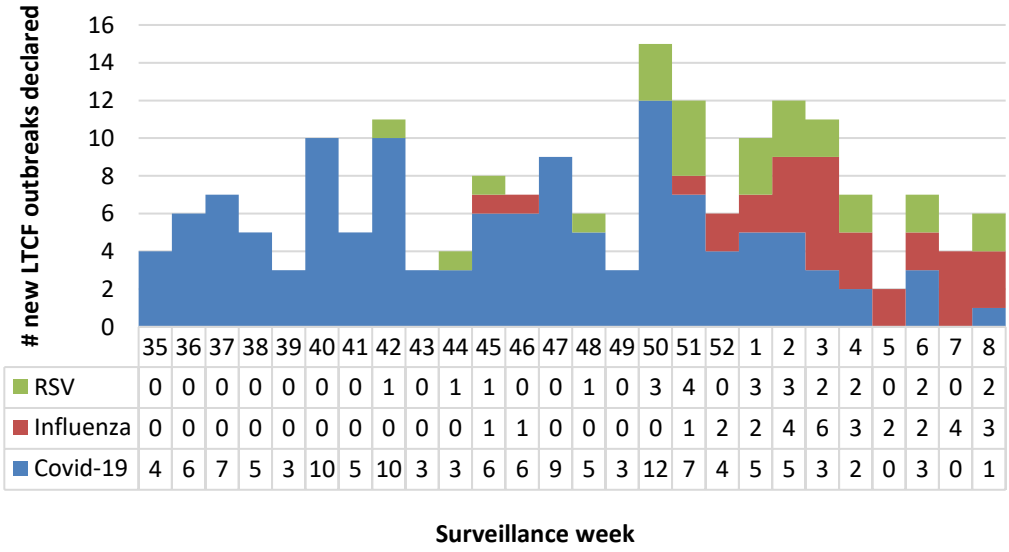
Figure 7: Laboratory-confirmed RSV cases by week (N=1257), 2023-2024 season, with comparison to previous seasons, Nova Scotia[11]



[11] There were no reported RSV cases during the 2020-2021 season. There has been a change in testing methods with the implementation of multiplex respiratory virus PCR. This may increase the number of cases detected.

Respiratory Outbreaks

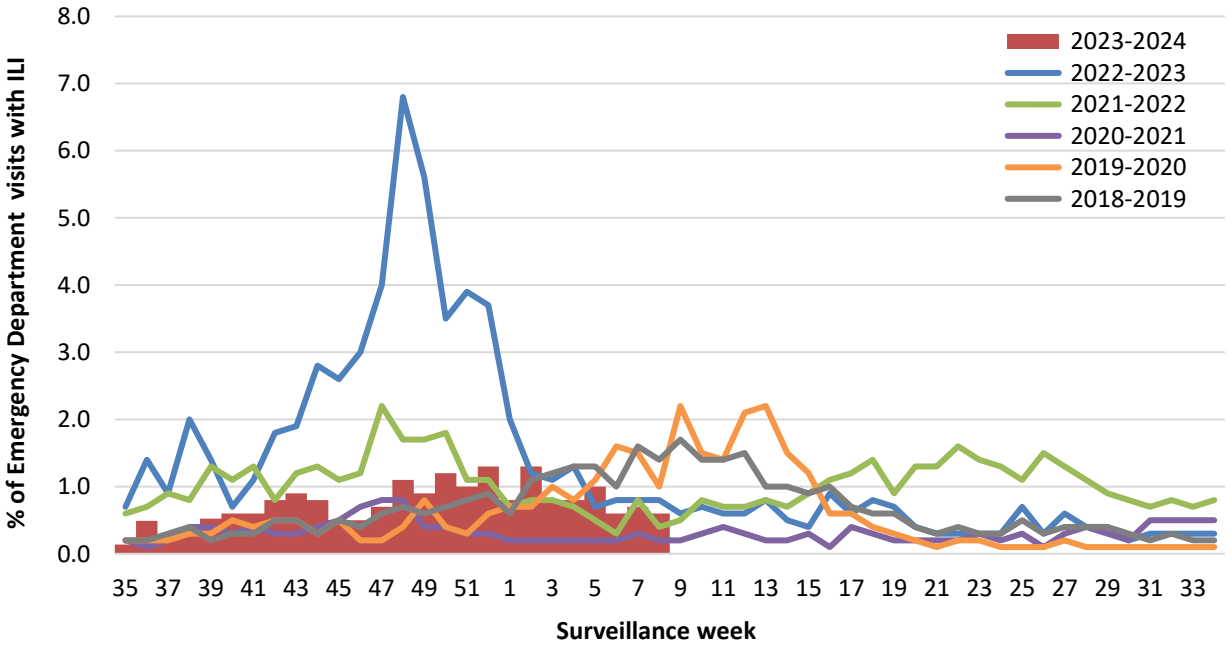
Figure 8. Number of new long term care facility respiratory outbreaks by week and respiratory virus (influenza, COVID-19 and RSV), 2023-2024 season, Nova Scotia[12]



	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
RSV	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	4	0	3	3	2	2	0	2	0	2
Influenza	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	4	6	3	2	2	4	3
Covid-19	4	6	7	5	3	10	5	10	3	3	6	6	9	5	3	12	7	4	5	5	3	2	0	3	0	1

Syndromic Surveillance

Figure 9: Percentage of emergency department visits due to ILI by report week, 2023-2024 season, with comparison to previous seasons, Nova Scotia



[12] Outbreak definitions can be found in the Appendix.

OTHER RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

Table 8: Number of positive specimens for other respiratory viruses, current reporting period and cumulative 2023-2024 season, Nova Scotia

PATHOGEN	CURRENT PERIOD	CUMULATIVE 2023-2024
Adenovirus	0	39
Bocavirus	0	0
Coronavirus*	3	5
Enterovirus/Rhinovirus	1	203
Metapneumovirus	0	3
Parainfluenza	0	29

**Excludes COVID-19*

Appendix – Data Notes and Definitions

Data Notes

- A surveillance week runs from Sunday to Saturday. Nova Scotia's 2023-2024 season is aligned with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) FluWatch surveillance weeks.
    - This year runs from August 27, 2023 (Week 35) to August 24, 2024 (Week 34).
- Notifications of hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths may lag; deaths are particularly affected. Additionally, data are incomplete for the most recent week because COVID-19 and influenza outcome reporting from public health occurs on Wednesdays. The most recent surveillance week is not included in graphs showing outcomes by week because of this.
- The definition for a COVID-19 hospitalization was changed in May 2023.
- 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 influenza, RSV, and COVID-19.
    - In the 2022-2023 season, Nova Scotia saw increased accessibility to a multiplex PCR testing which likely increased detection in community of influenza and RSV.
    - Testing is limited to specific populations and the numbers reported here under-represent the true burden of disease in the community.

Definitions used in respiratory surveillance, and useful links, 2023-2024

See: Nova Scotia's Respiratory Response Plan

Acronym List

ICU Intensive care unit
ILI Influenza-like illness
RSV Respiratory syncytial virus
PCR Polymerase chain reaction

Outbreak Definitions

Lab Confirmed COVID-19 Outbreak
Two or more laboratory-confirmed resident cases, AND at least one is a facility acquired case, with all cases epidemiologically linked within the LTCF in a 10-day period

Lab Confirmed Influenza Outbreak
Two or more resident cases of ILI (influenza-like illness), where at least one is a laboratory confirmed case of influenza, within the LTCF in a 7-day period

Lab Confirmed Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Outbreak
Two or more symptomatic residents where at least one is a laboratory confirmed case of RSV, epidemiologically linked within the LTCF in a 7-day period

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 under 5 or 65 and older, 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: https://www.who.int/teams/global-influenza-programme/surveillance-and-monitoring/influenza-updates/current-influenza-update
US: www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly