Virus WAtch
Week ending 13\textsuperscript{th} March 2022

Key Points
Please note that the influenza and ILI surveillance systems in Western Australia (WA) have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, respiratory viral activity should be interpreted with caution and take into account the effects of changes in health seeking behaviour including accessing alternate health services such as telehealth, focused testing for COVID-19 at COVID-19 clinics or specific acute respiratory infection clinics, increased testing for other respiratory viruses and the impact of international border closures.

Influenza and influenza-like illnesses (ILI)
- Indicators of influenza activity remain below interseasonal levels.
- ILI-related presentations to EDs decreased in the past week and ILI activity at sentinel GPs remained in the lower range of values usually seen at this time of year.
- There were two PCR-positive influenza samples in the past week.
- With the exception of SARS-CoV-2, there was an overall decrease in non-influenza virus detections at PathWest in the past week.

Gastroenteritis
- There were no gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel GPs but presentations to EDs increased in the past week.
- Notifications for rotavirus decreased and detections of norovirus increased in the past week

Other vaccine-preventable diseases
- Chickenpox and shingles: There were no chickenpox presentations to sentinel GPs in the past week but chickenpox presentations to EDs increased above baseline levels. Shingles presentations to sentinel GPs and EDs increased in the past week.
- Measles: No measles cases were notified in the past week.
- Mumps: No mumps cases were notified in the past week.
- Rubella: No rubella cases were notified in the past week.
- Invasive meningococcal disease (IMD): No IMD cases were notified past week.

Other diseases
Coronavirus COVID-19: As of 13\textsuperscript{th} March 2022, WA has recorded 46,986 COVID-19 cases. See webpage for further information.
Influenza and influenza-like illnesses (ILI)

The rate of ILI presentations to sentinel GPs remained in the lower range of values usually reported at this time of year (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Rate of ILI per 1000 consultations at sentinel GPs (Australian Sentinel Practices Research Network) in WA by week, 2017 to 2022

The number of ILI-related presentations and admissions to EDs decreased in the past week (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Number and rate of ILI presentations/admissions to Emergency Departments in WA in the last eight weeks

Note: This graph is a summary of current EDIS data using the ICD codes B34.9 and J06.9, which are consistent with a clinical presentation of a viral illness. This data may differ from that presented in the Winter Respiratory Illness Report provided by the Information and System Performance Directorate.
The number of respiratory viral presentations to EDs was stable in the past week and remained in the lower range of values usually reported at this time of year (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Number of respiratory viral presentations to Emergency Departments in WA by week, 2017 to 2022**

![Graph showing respiratory viral presentations](image)

Note: This graph is a summary of current EDIS data using the ICD codes B34.9 and J06.9 which are consistent with a clinical presentation of a viral illness. This data may differ from that presented in the Winter Respiratory Illness Report provided by the Information and System Performance Directorate.

Two cases of influenza were reported to the Department of Health in the past week (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Number of influenza notifications in WA by week, 2017 to 2022**

![Graph showing influenza notifications](image)

Note: This graph is a summary of all influenza notifications, by week of onset, received by the DoH, WA (through WANIDD) to the end of the current reporting week. The seasonal threshold defines a value above which may indicate epidemic seasonal influenza activity. The threshold value is calculated based on analysis of seasonal influenza data from the past four years.
None of the 1,620 specimens submitted for influenza PCR testing at PathWest were positive in the past week (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Proportion of influenza PCR specimens positive for influenza at PathWest by week, 2017 to 2022**

Note: This graph is a summary of all WA samples reported by PathWest, excluding samples referred by other private laboratories for influenza subtyping.

With the exception of SARS-CoV-2, there was an overall decrease in non-influenza virus detections in the past week (Figure 6).

**Figure 6. Number of non-influenza respiratory virus detections at PathWest by week, 2021 to 2022**

Note: This graph is a summary of all WA samples positive for a common respiratory virus other than influenza reported by PathWest.
The number of COVID-19 cases in WA almost doubled in the past week to 27,568 cases: 16,830 with a positive PCR test and 10,730 with a positive rapid antigen test (Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Number of COVID-19 cases in WA by test type and notification date, 2022**

Note: Data sourced from Public Health Operations COVID-19 Unified System (PHOCUS); Notification date is to the 8pm reporting period

**Gastroenteritis**

There were no gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel GPs in the past week (Figure 8).

**Figure 8. Number of gastroenteritis presentations per 1000 consultations at sentinel GPs (Australian Sentinel Practices Research Network) in WA by week, 2017 to 2022**
Gastroenteritis presentations to EDs increased slightly in the past week but remained below baseline levels. Admissions to EDs remained stable and below baseline levels (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Number of gastroenteritis presentations and admissions to Emergency Departments in WA in the last eight weeks

*This graph is a summary of current EDIS data for gastroenteritis presentations and admissions. Baseline levels for gastroenteritis presentations and admissions were calculated using the mean of weekly EDIS data from week 1, 2017 to week 52, 2021.

The number of gastroenteritis presentations at EDs increased in the past week but remained well below the range of values usually reported at this time of year (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Number of gastroenteritis presentations to Emergency Departments in WA by week, 2017 to 2022

*This graph is a summary of current EDIS data for gastroenteritis presentations
Rotavirus notifications to the Department of Health decreased in the past week and were lower than levels usually reported at this time of the year. The number of norovirus detections at PathWest increased in the past week (Figure 11).

**Figure 11. Number of rotavirus notifications to the Department of Health and norovirus detections at PathWest in WA in the last eight weeks**

![Diagram showing rotavirus notifications and norovirus detections]

Note: Rotavirus notifications reported to the Department of Health include detections from all WA pathology laboratories. Norovirus detections are from PathWest only.

**Viral rashes**

There were no chickenpox presentations to sentinel GPs over the past eight weeks. The rate of shingles presentations to sentinel GPs increased above baseline levels in the past week (Figure 12).

**Figure 12. Number of varicella-zoster presentations per 1000 consultations at sentinel GPs (Australian Sentinel Practices Research Network) in WA in the last eight weeks**

![Diagram showing chickenpox and shingles presentations]

Note: Baseline levels for chickenpox and shingles presentations to WA ASPREN GPs per thousand consultations were calculated using the mean of weekly WA ASPREN data from week 1, 2017 to week 52, 2021.
Chickenpox and shingles presentations at EDs increased above baseline levels in the past week (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Number of varicella-zoster presentations to Emergency Departments in WA in the last eight weeks

Note: Baseline levels for varicella-zoster virus presentations to Emergency Departments in WA were calculated using the mean of weekly EDIS data from week 1, 2017 to week 52, 2021.

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