



Ontario Influenza Bulletin | 2012-2013

SURVEILLANCE WEEKS 36 and 37 (September 2, 2012 – September 15, 2012)

This issue of the Ontario Influenza Bulletin provides information on the surveillance period from September 2, 2012 to September 15, 2012 (weeks 36 and 37). Unless otherwise specified, **the data presented are for weeks 36 and 37**; data extraction and analysis for this issue of the Bulletin occurred on Wednesday September 19, 2012. In order to enable our readers to better assess influenza activity in Ontario, we have combined various sources of information in the following table. **Please note that Public Health Ontario is now publishing abbreviated versions of the Ontario Influenza Bulletin on alternating weeks until November 2012. [Influenza Activity Maps](#) are available on the weeks that the Bulletin is not published.**

Assessment of Influenza and Other Respiratory Virus Activity in Ontario

Measure of Activity	Assessment of measure compared to previous assessment period (Lower, Similar, Higher)	Reasoning behind assessment
Laboratory Confirmed Influenza Cases*	Lower	No new influenza cases were reported by health units in weeks 36 and 37, which is lower than the number reported in weeks 34 and 35 (3). The percent positivity for influenza in Ontario was slightly lower in weeks 36 and 37 at 0.52% compared to 0.79% for weeks 34 and 35 (Table 1).**
Respiratory virus activity	Enterovirus/rhinovirus activity is higher	Among all circulating respiratory viruses (Table 1), enterovirus/rhinovirus had the highest percent positivity in weeks 36 and 37 at 17.80%, which is higher than weeks 34 and 35 at 9.95%.
Institutional Respiratory Infection Outbreaks	Lower	Thirteen (13) new institutional respiratory infection outbreaks were reported in weeks 36 and 37. This is lower than the number of new institutional respiratory infection outbreaks reported in weeks 34 and 35 (18) (Figure 1).
Influenza Activity Levels Reported by Health Units	Lower	For week 37, all regions reported no influenza activity (Figure 2).
Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) Consultation Rate reported by Sentinels	Higher	The provincial ILI consultation rate increased from 9.17/1,000 patient visits in week 36 to 11.32/1,000 patient visits in week 37. This rate is similar to the average consultation rate for week 37 based on previous years (Figure 3).
OVERALL ASSESSMENT FOR VIRUS ACTIVITY	Influenza activity in Ontario was similar compared to the previous weeks.	Overall, the indicators show that influenza activity during weeks 36 and 37 was similar compared to weeks 34 and 35.

*This is the number of cases by **reported** date from iPHIS and should be interpreted with caution as there is a lag between the onset of illness and reporting to public health.

**Positivity reflects positive specimens reported to Public Health Ontario by the Centre for Immunization and Respiratory Infectious Diseases (CIRID); as a result, there may not be agreement between the number of cases reported by public health through iPHIS and the percent positivity reported by CIRID.

Highlights of current respiratory virus activity for weeks 36 and 37 compared to weeks 34 and 35

- Enterovirus/rhinovirus had the highest percent positivity for weeks 36 and 37 at 17.80% (Table 1). Parainfluenza virus had the second highest percent positivity among specimens submitted for testing in weeks 36 and 37. Percent positivity for parainfluenza virus decreased from 5.81% for weeks 34 and 35 to 2.94% for weeks 36 and 37.
- In weeks 36 and 37, a total of thirteen new institutional respiratory infection outbreaks were reported, including five outbreaks of enterovirus/rhinovirus and eight outbreaks with no organism reported (Figure 1). For the 2012-2013 season to date, 20 institutional respiratory infection outbreaks have been reported.

Table 1. Number of respiratory specimens tested by all methods for influenza and other respiratory viruses and percent positivity, Ontario: Weeks 36 and 37

Detected viruses	Number and percent positive specimens			Total number of specimens tested		
	Week 36 n (%)	Week 37 n (%)	Cumulative n (%)	Week 36 n	Week 37 n	Cumulative n
Influenza A (all)	1 (0.3)	2 (0.8)	7 (0.78)	329	251	894
Influenza B	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	329	251	894
Parainfluenza virus	4 (1.34)	10 (5.65)	28 (3.66)	299	177	765
Adenovirus	2 (0.67)	1 (0.56)	5 (0.65)	299	177	765
Respiratory syncytial virus	0 (0)	1 (0.56)	1 (0.13)	300	180	779
Enterovirus/rhinovirus	45 (18)	31 (17.51)	92 (14.02)	250	177	656
Human metapneumovirus	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	184	97	431
Coronavirus	2 (1.48)	0 (0)	2 (0.62)	135	97	322

Source: Centre for Immunization and Respiratory Infectious Diseases, Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). These data have been obtained from the Respiratory Virus Detection tables of Public Health Agency of Canada from 16 labs in Ontario and do not include data from late reports to PHAC for the current season: Weeks 36 & 37, 2012. Please note that the last version received from PHAC as of 12:00 PM on September 19, 2012 was used.

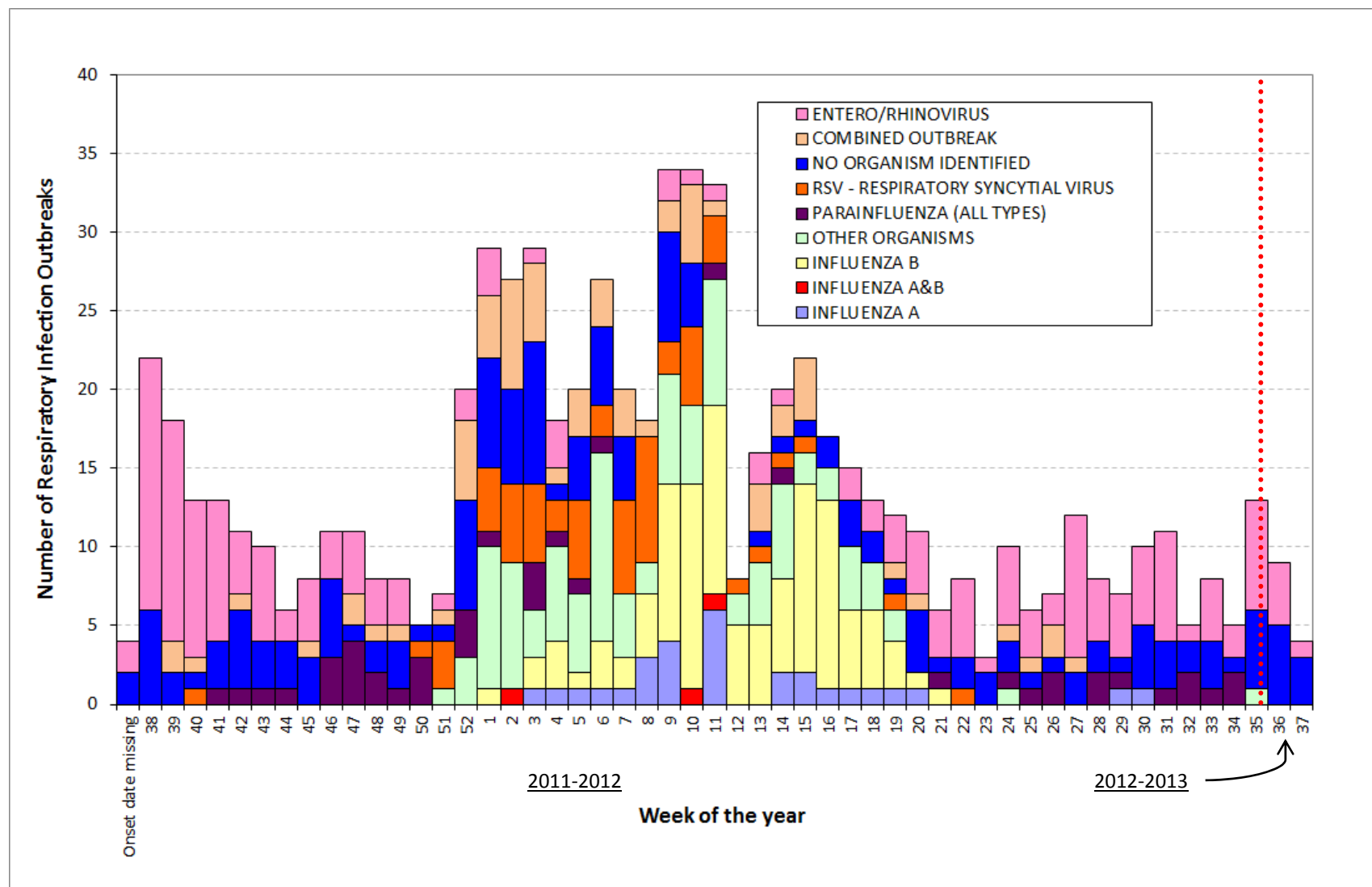
Note: Cumulative numbers include reports from week 35, as reporting by PHAC includes week 35 as part of the 2012-2013 season.

Note: Total numbers reported include late reports from previous weeks; therefore totals may not be equal to the sum of the weekly numbers.

Note: Cumulative numbers for the season to date are available through FluWatch: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/>

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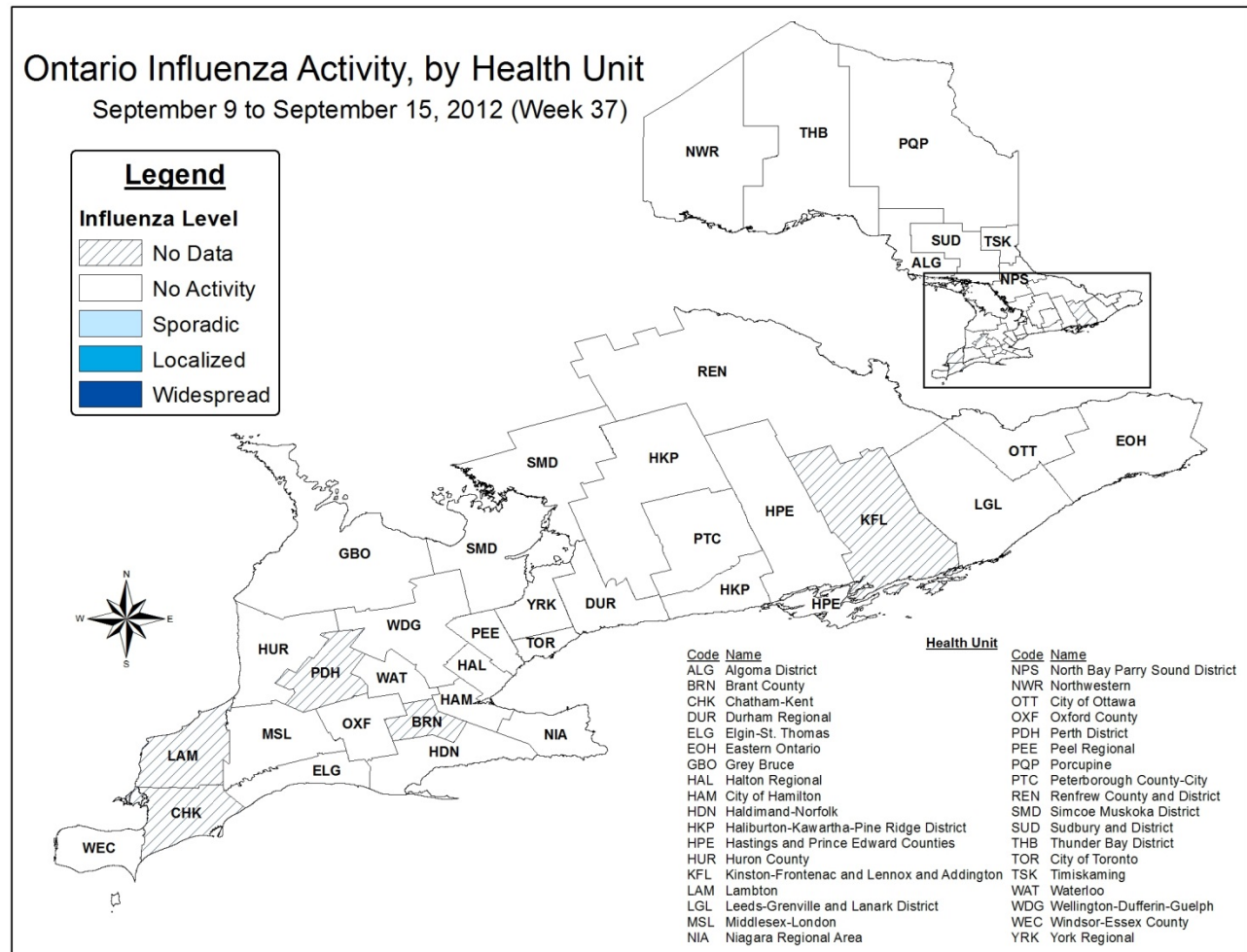
Figure 1: Institutional respiratory infection outbreaks in Ontario by onset of illness in the first case: Total outbreaks up to and including week 37 of the 2012-2013 season by causative organism



Source: Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, integrated Public Health Information System (iPHIS) database, extracted by Public Health Ontario [2012/09/19]

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Figure 2: Influenza activity* levels in Ontario by health unit for week 37, 2012

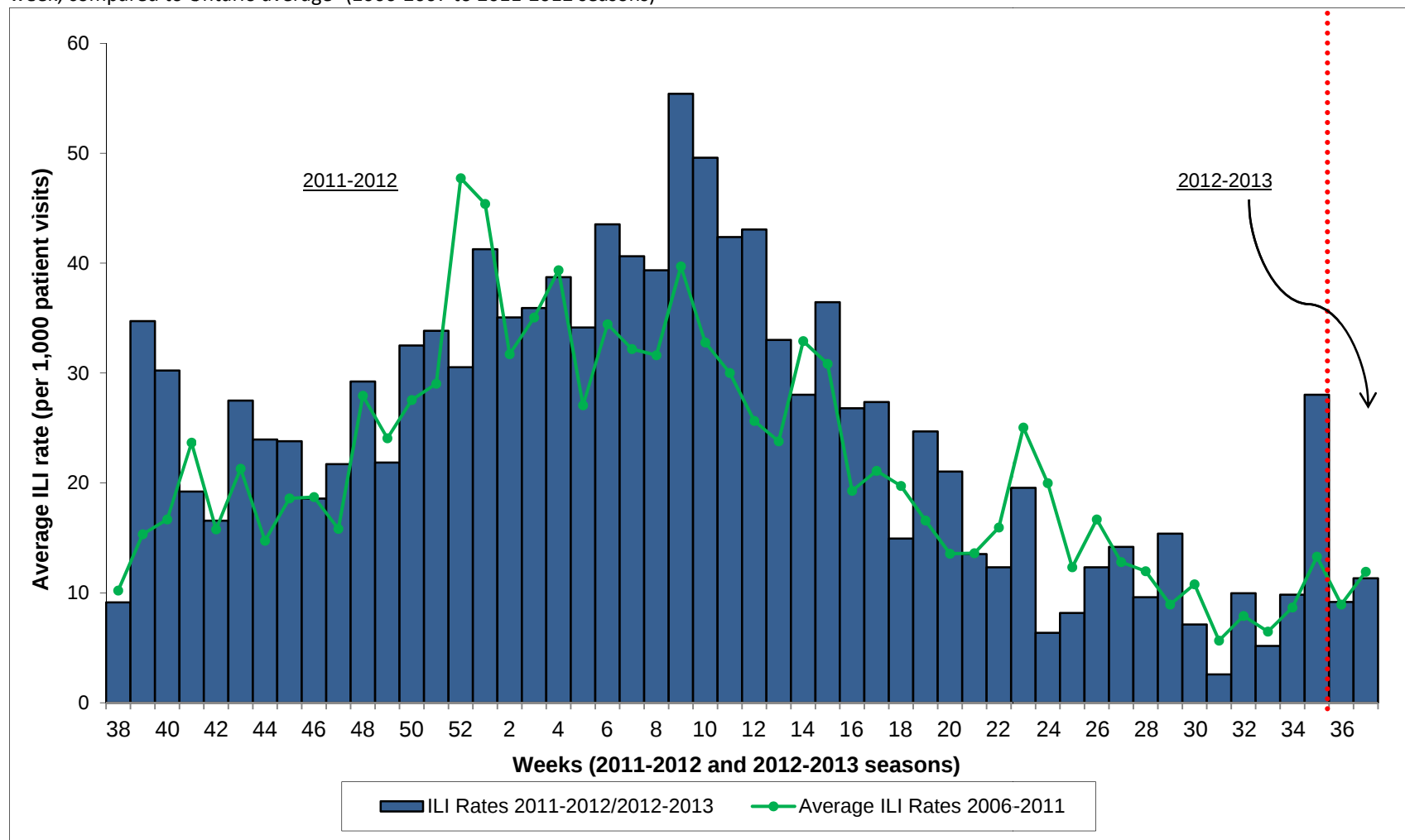


Source: Public Health Ontario [Provincial Influenza Activity Report (Appendix C) Database]

* Influenza activity levels are assigned by local public health units and reported to Public Health Ontario by the Tuesday following the end of the surveillance week at 4 pm. Activity levels are assigned based on laboratory confirmations, ILI reports from various sources, and laboratory confirmed institutional respiratory infection outbreaks. Please click here for [detailed definitions for the 2012-2013 season](#).

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Figure 3: Average ILI consultation rate (per 1,000 patient visits) reported by sentinels* in Ontario up to week 37 of the 2012-2013 surveillance season, by report week, compared to Ontario average[†] (2006-2007 to 2011-2012 seasons)



Source: Public Health Agency of Canada

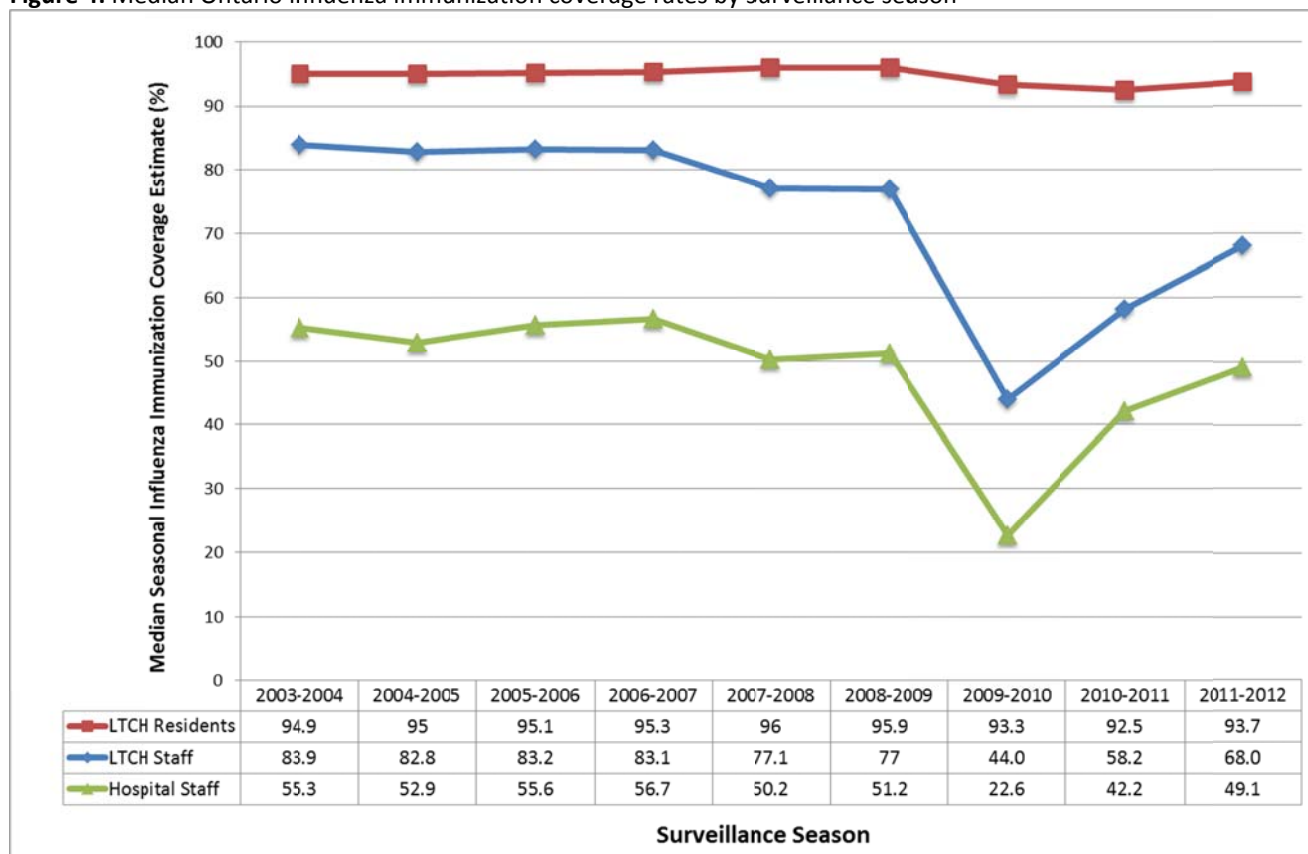
* Sentinel information is reported to Public Health Agency of Canada; 49 sentinels reported in week 37.

[†] Ontario average ILI rates include data from the 2006-2007 to the 2011-2012 seasons, excluding ILI rates during the time period of the influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 pandemic in Ontario (April 2009 to January 2010) due to the incomparability of those rates to a regular influenza season.

Ontario influenza vaccine coverage rates for long term care home staff and residents and hospital staff, 2011-2012 surveillance season

As per the Ontario *Influenza Prevention and Surveillance Protocol for Long-Term Care Facilities* and the *Ontario Surveillance Protocol for Ontario Hospitals*, respectively, immunization status for the seasonal influenza vaccine in residents and staff of long term care homes (LTCH) and staff of public hospitals as of November 15 are to be reported to the local medical officer of health by December 1 of each year. This information is then reported to the province by the health unit. Figure 4 below outlines trends in reported influenza immunization coverage rates for the seasonal influenza vaccine up to the 2011-2012 surveillance season.

Figure 4: Median Ontario influenza immunization coverage rates by surveillance season



Source: Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), Ontario Influenza Immunization Database, analyzed by Public Health Ontario.