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The purpose of the *Influenza Watch* is to summarize influenza surveillance in San Diego County. This summary report reflects the 2020-21 season.

Season Highlights

- The season had the lowest influenza activity in the last 10 years with 844 cases reported and 2 deaths, likely a result of the community non-pharmacologic interventions that were instituted in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- Influenza cases peaked in week 53 (ending January 2, 2021) with 216 cases reported.
- Influenza A and Influenza B each accounted for about half the reports.
- Persons ages 65+ years and persons younger than 18 years made up a smaller proportion of influenza cases than in the past four seasons, with persons ages 18-64 years constituting 86% of cases.
- There were 142 cases of influenza A/B and SARS-CoV-2 co-infections, representing 17% of all influenza cases.
- The two influenza-associated deaths were in persons 65 years and older. Only one was known to have received the 2020-21 influenza vaccine, and both had underlying medical conditions. Both persons were co-infected with SARS-CoV-2.
- The percent of emergency department visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was relatively lower than the past three seasons, peaking at 4% in weeks 51 (ending December 19, 2020) and 53 (ending January 2, 2021). High percentages of pneumonia and influenza (P&I) deaths were registered between December 19, 2020 to March 6, 2021, due to COVID-19.

2020-21
Season Summary

844

Total Cases

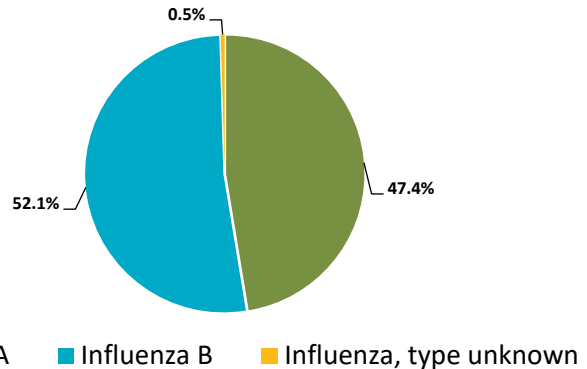
2

Deaths[†]

0

Outbreaks^{*}

Virus Characteristics



[†] Flu deaths less than 18 years of age are reportable to CDPH.

^{*} In a congregate living setting, outbreaks are defined as at least one laboratory-confirmed influenza case in the setting of a cluster (≥2 cases) of influenza-like illness (ILI) within a 72-hour period.

Table 1. Influenza Surveillance Indicators.

Surveillance Indicator	2020-21 Season	2019-20 Season	Prior 3-Season Average*
All influenza detections reported (rapid or PCR)	844	20,711	17,073
Number of influenza-related outbreaks reported [∞]	0	61	68
Number of influenza-related deaths reported [^]	2	108	176

*Includes FYs 2017-18, 2018-19, and 2019-20. Influenza season is July 1 – June 30, Weeks 27-26.

[∞]At least one case of laboratory-confirmed influenza in a setting experiencing two or more cases of influenza like illness (ILI) within a 72-hour period.

Total confirmed influenza outbreaks in prior seasons: 62 in 2019-20, 25 in 2018-19, and 119 in 2017-18.

[^]Current FY deaths are shown by week of report; by week of death for prior FYs. Total deaths reported in prior seasons: 108 in 2019-20, 77 in 2018-19, and 343 in 2017-18.

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Figure 1. San Diego County Influenza Detections by Week of Report.

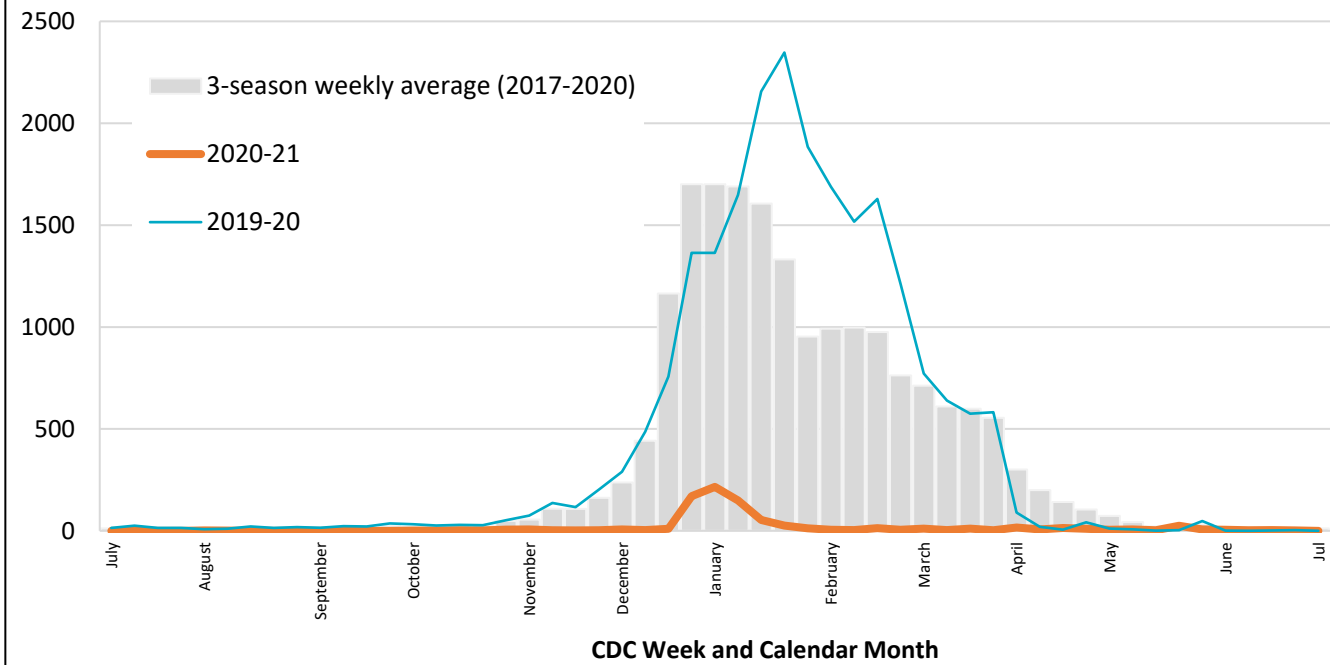


Figure 2. San Diego County Influenza and COVID-19 Infections by Month of Report.

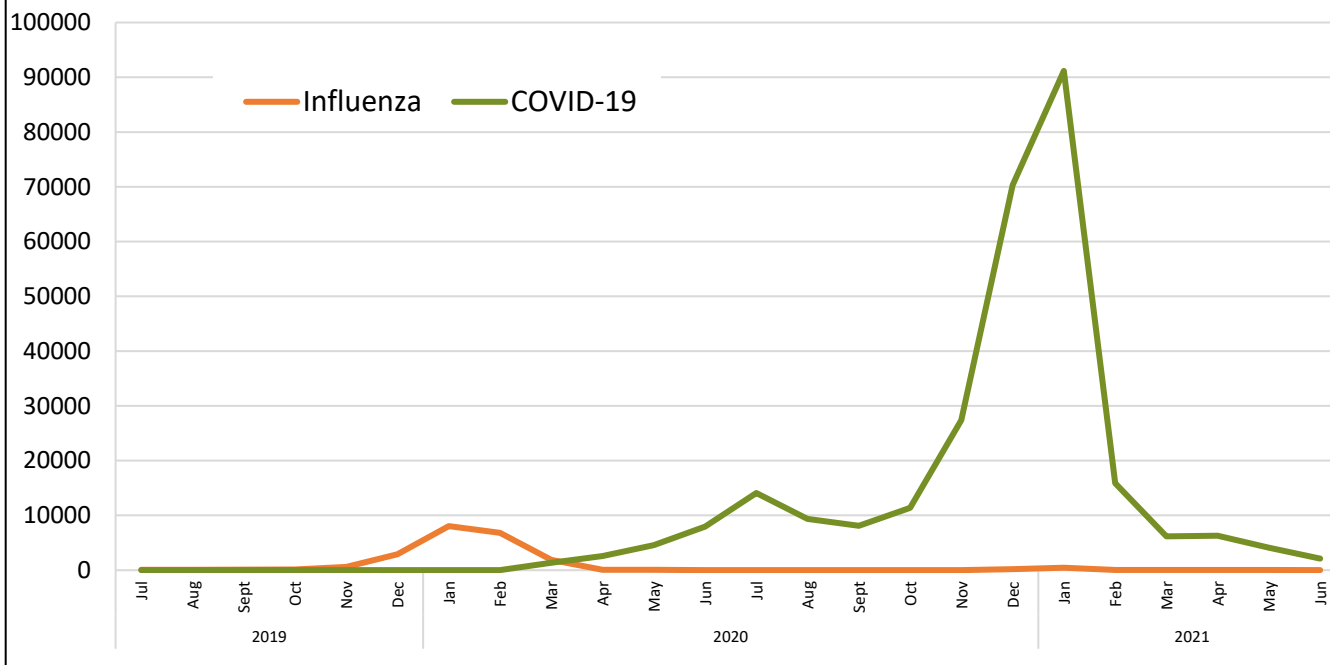
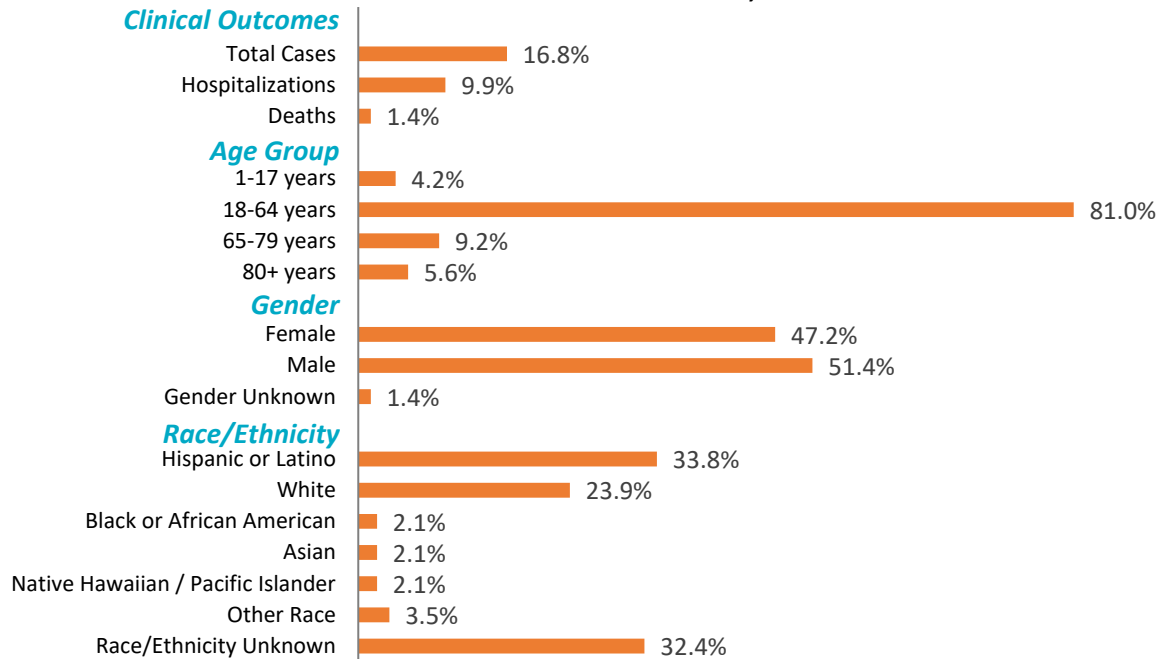
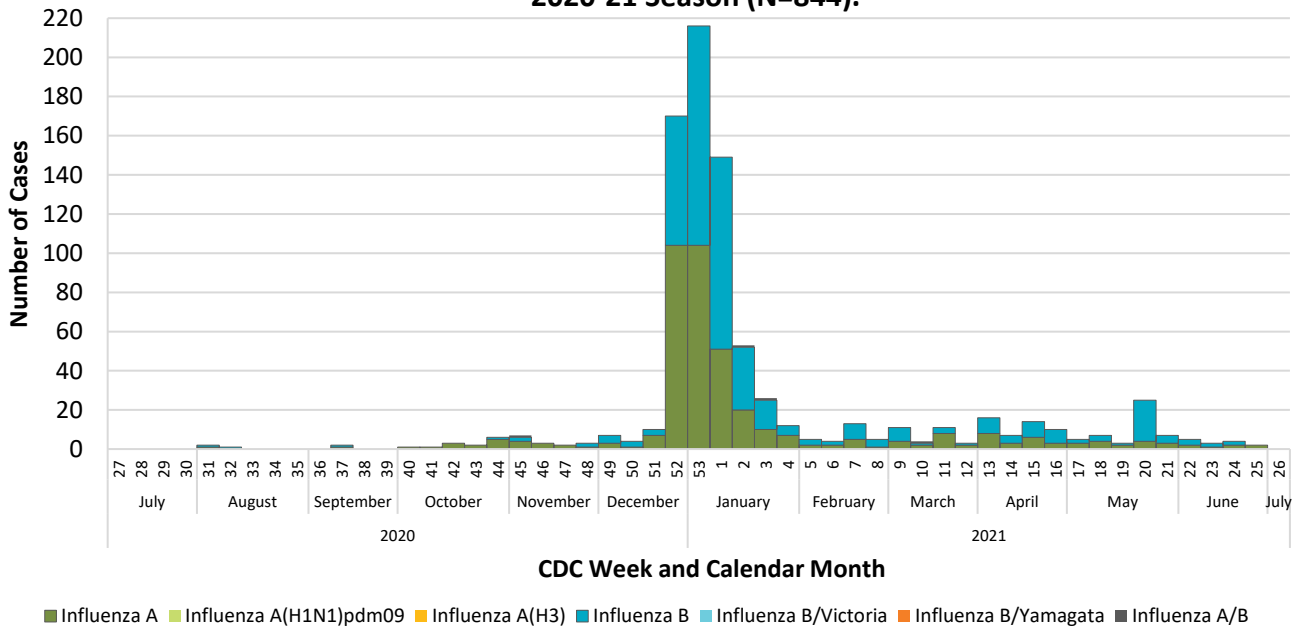


Figure 3. Selected Characteristics of Influenza Infections Co-Infected with SARS-CoV-2*, N=142.



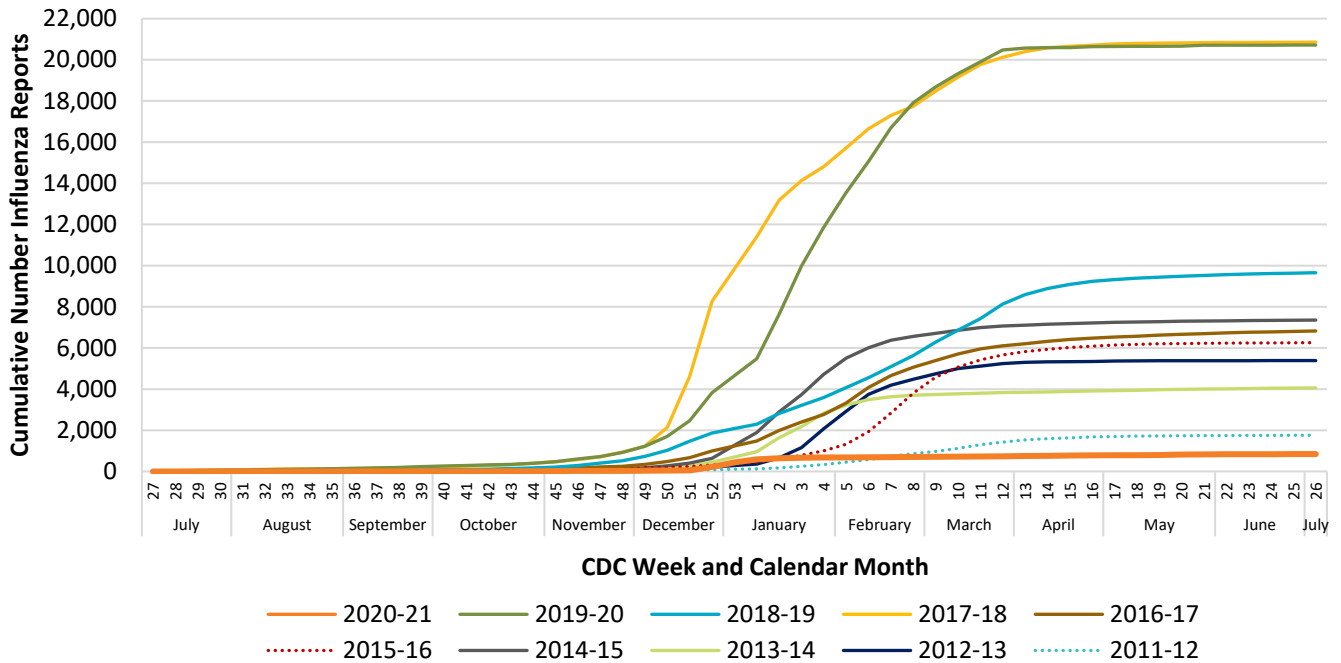
*Co-infections were identified as any positive influenza A/B tests and positive RT-PCR or antigen tests for SARS-CoV-2 (the causative agent of COVID-19) within one week of each other. There were 53 confirmed and 89 probable COVID-19 cases among the co-infections.

Figure 4. San Diego County Influenza Detections by Type and Week of Report, 2020-21 Season (N=844).



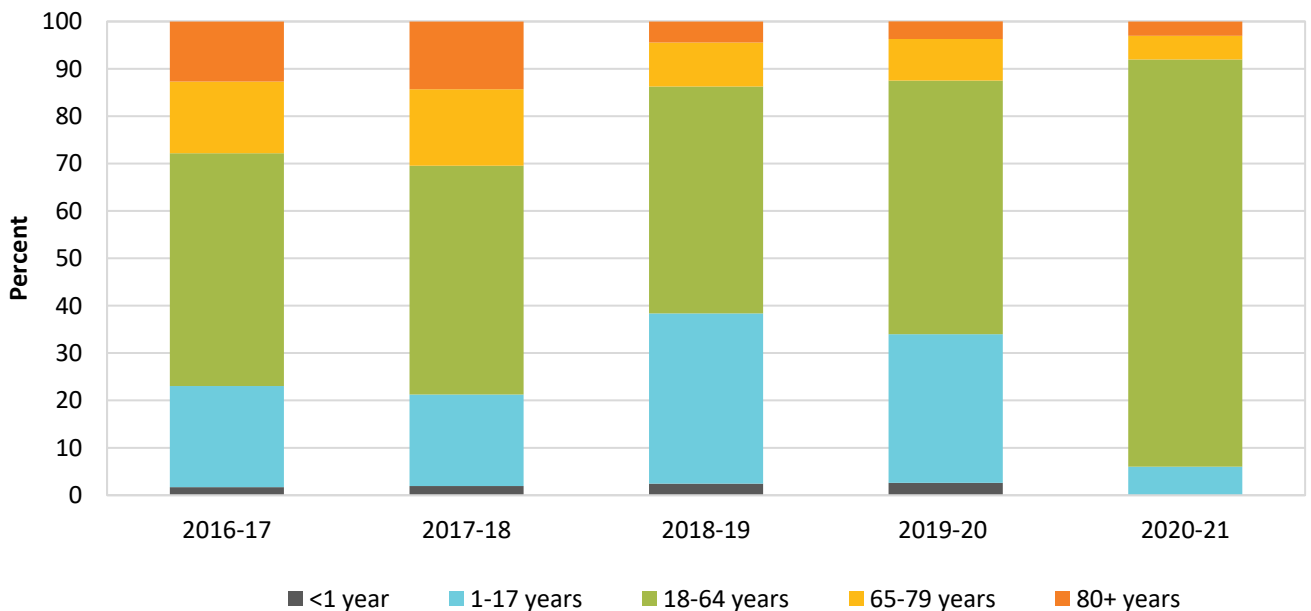
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Figure 5. Cumulative Influenza Cases by CDC Episode Week* and Season.



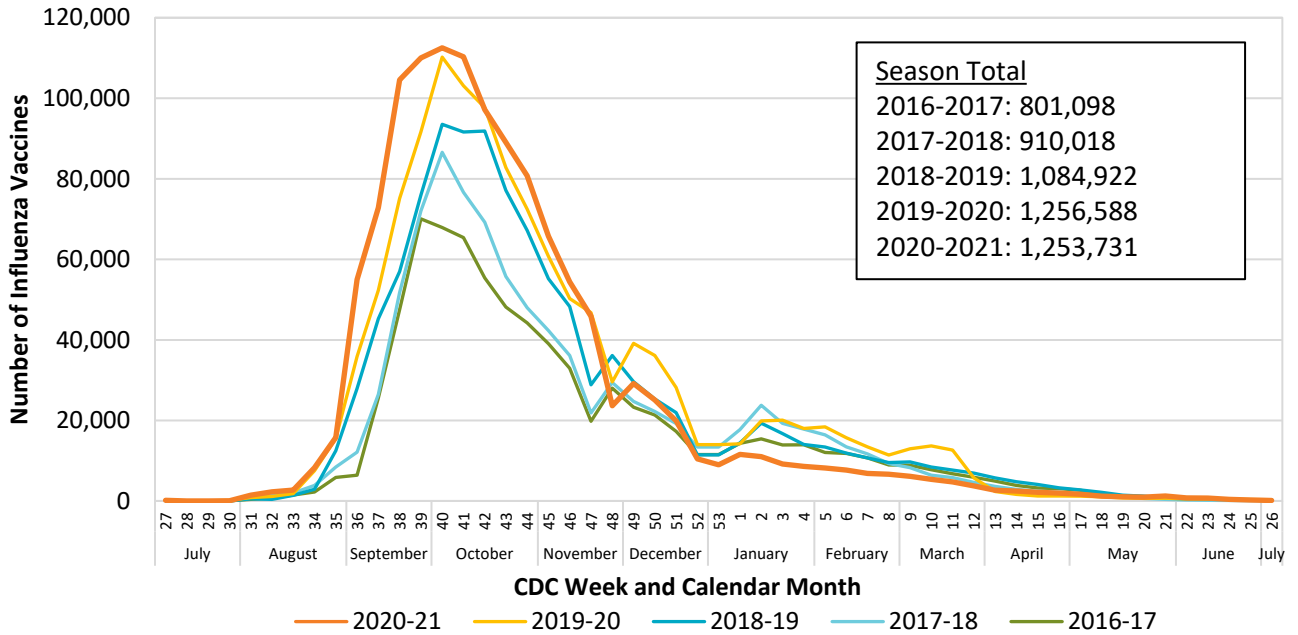
*If case did not have symptoms or illness onset date is unavailable, the earliest of specimen collection date, date of death, or date reported is used instead.

Figure 6. Proportion of Influenza Cases by Age Group and Season.



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Figure 7. Number of Influenza Vaccinations Administered* by CDC Week and Season.



Influenza vaccinations administered and entered into the San Diego Immunization Registry ([SDIR](#)). Week 52 data are repeated for week 53 for seasons that do not include week 53.

Figure 8. Percent of Emergency Department Visits for ILI Chief Complaint by CDC Week and Season.

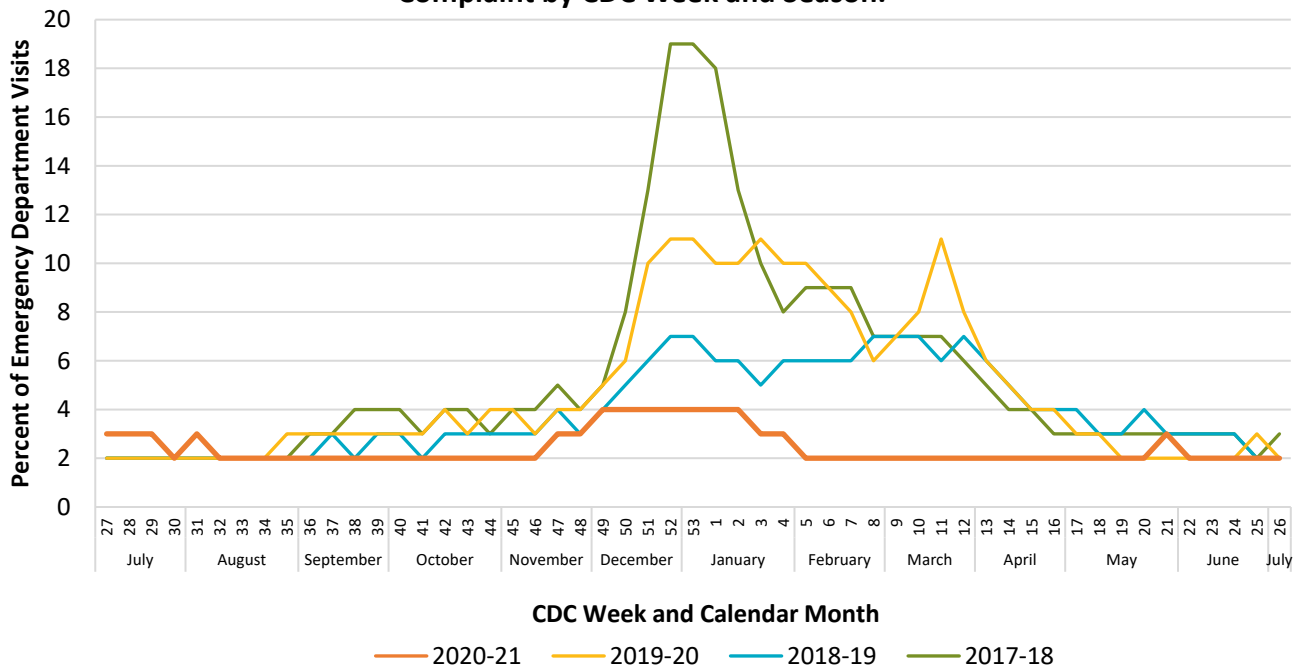
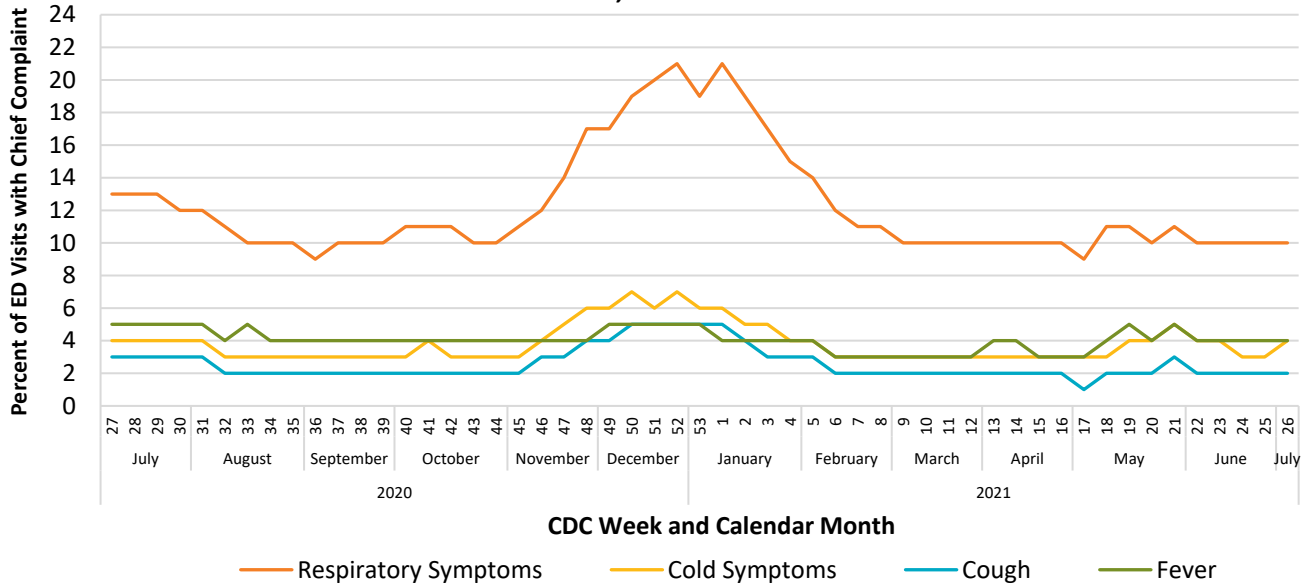
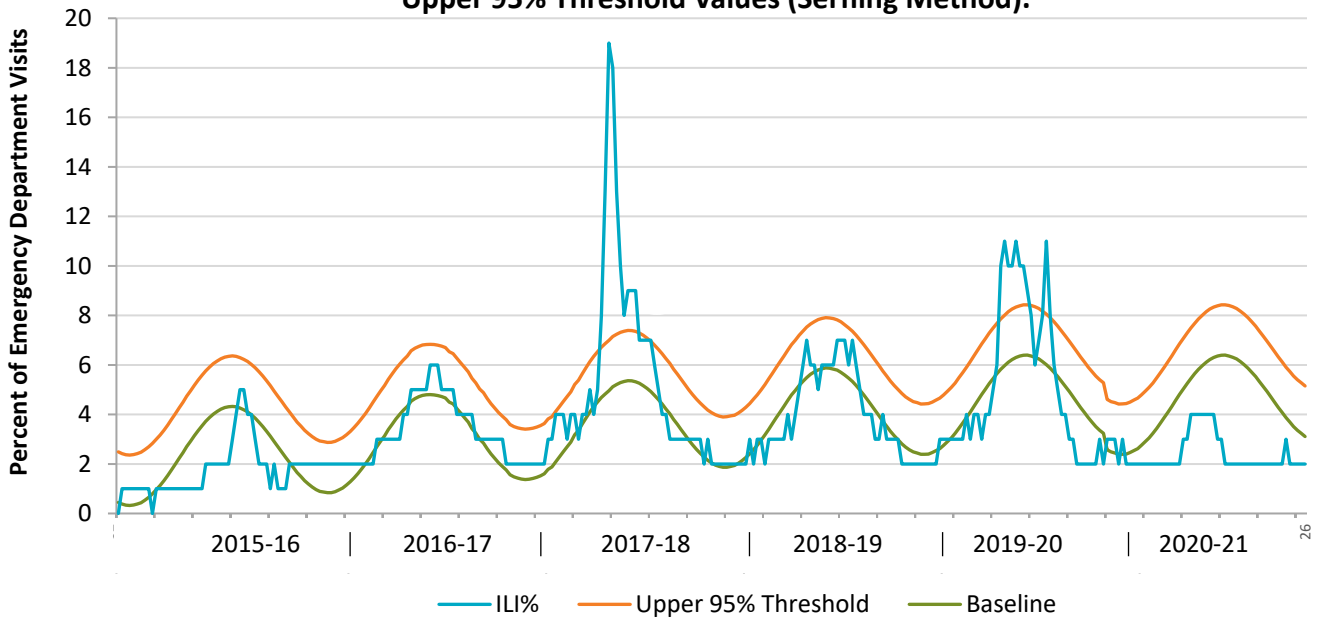


Figure 9. Percent of Emergency Department Visit Chief Complaints for Cough, Cold, Fever, or Respiratory Symptoms* by CDC Week, 2020-21 Season.

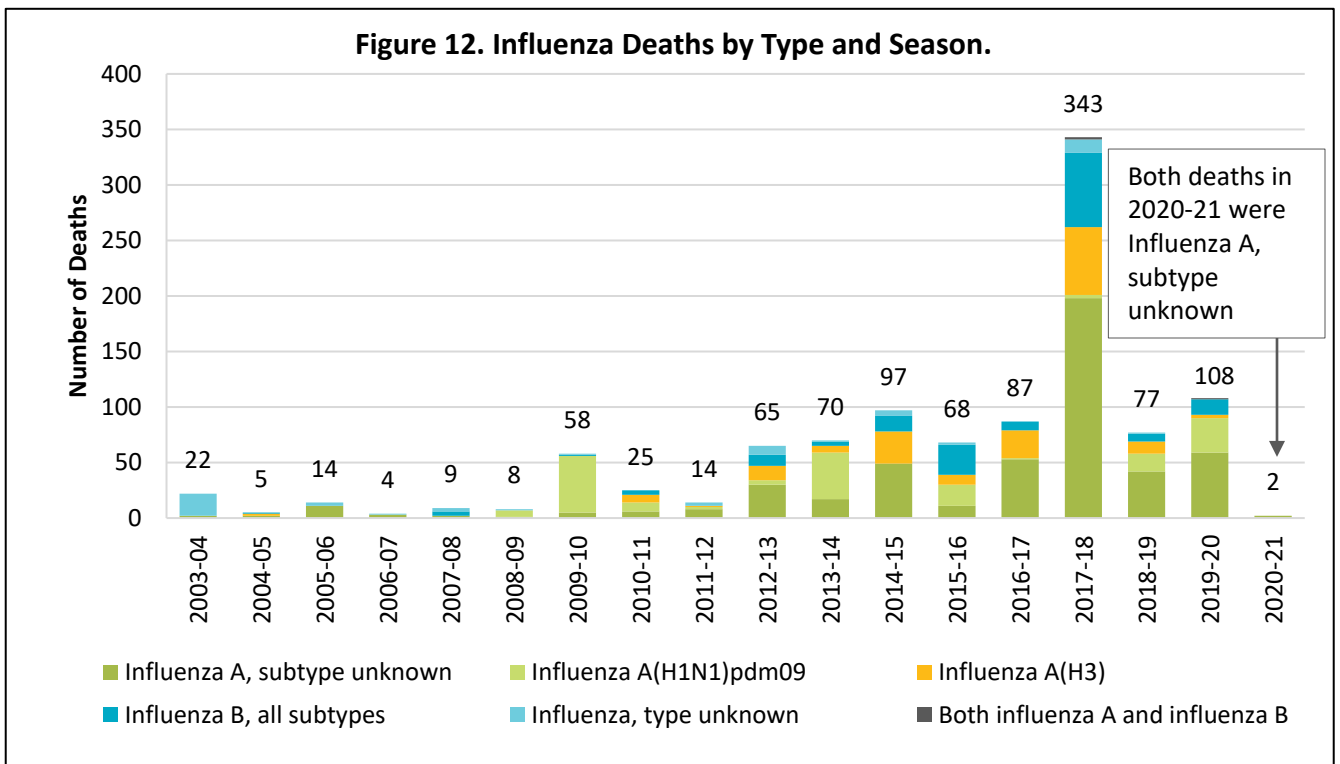
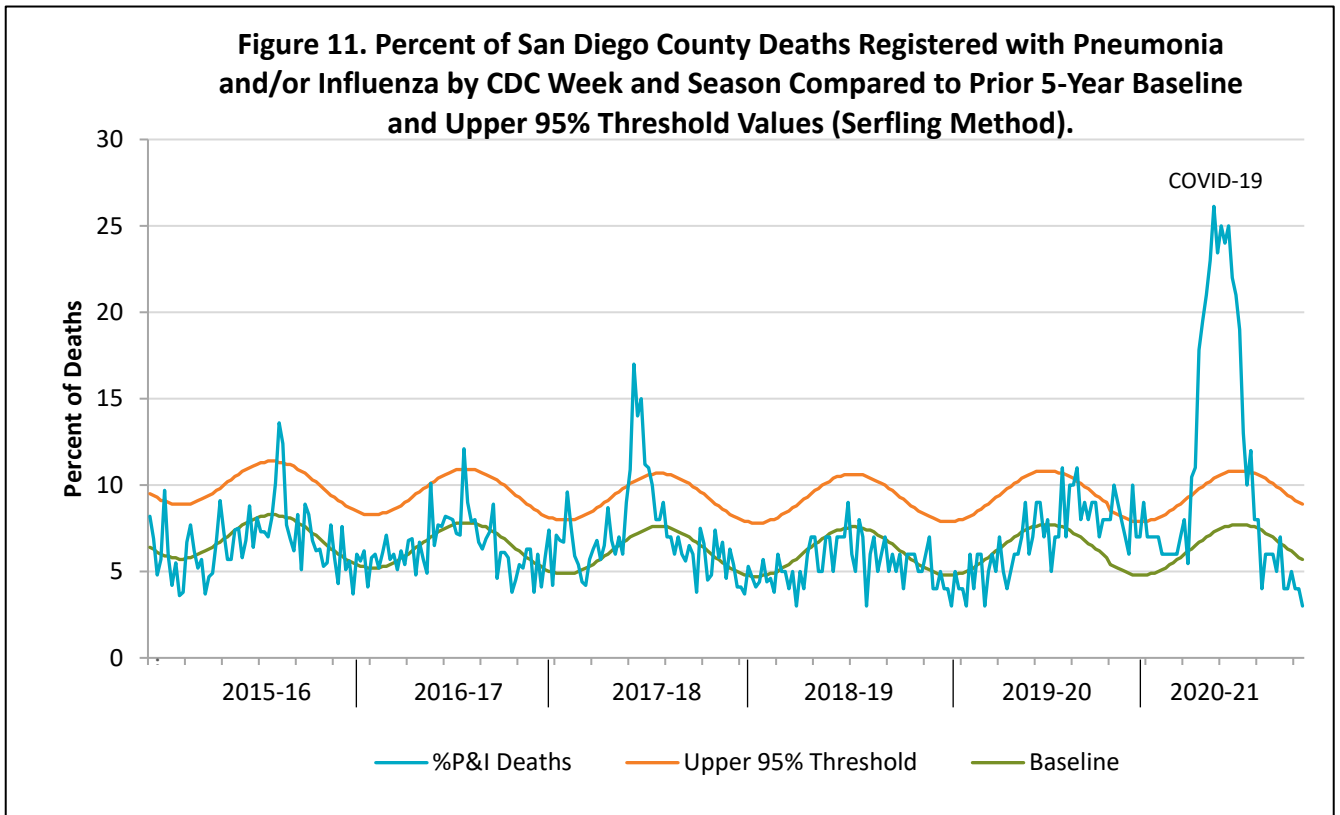


* Respiratory category includes cough, cold symptoms, influenza-like illness, and other respiratory symptoms.

Figure 10. Percent of San Diego County Emergency Department Visits for Influenza-like Illness by CDC Week and Season Compared to 5-Year Baseline and Upper 95% Threshold Values (Serfling Method).



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Influenza Reporting in San Diego County

Individual influenza cases are reportable to Public Health as of October 1, 2019. Please report laboratory-positive influenza results to the County Epidemiology Program by **FAX (858) 715-6458** using a [Confidential Morbidity Report Form](#), or an [Influenza Case Report Form](#), and/or a copy of the laboratory results. Also, please indicate if the patient died and/or is a resident of a congregate living facility (if known).

Influenza specimens may be sent to [Public Health Laboratory](#) (PHL) for confirmation and subtyping. Please contact PHL at **(619) 692-8500 before submitting** or for questions and use the current PHL Test Request Form found at https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa/programs/phs/phs_laboratory/. Contact the Epidemiology Program by telephone **(619) 692-8499** or email (EpiDiv.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov) with questions about influenza data. Influenza outbreaks should be reported by telephone to **(619) 692-8499**.

Resource Links

- County of San Diego Epidemiology Program www.sdepi.org
- County of San Diego [2018-19 Influenza Season Summary](#)
- County of San Diego Immunization Program (SDIZ) www.sdiz.org
- San Diego Regional Immunization Registry (SDIR) <http://www.sdiz.org/CAIR-SDIR/index.html>
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH) [Influenza Update](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Influenza Surveillance](#)

Influenza Watch Data Sources

The following sources of data are used to produce this report:

- **Influenza case reports:** Medical providers and laboratories report individual cases of confirmed influenza via fax or electronic laboratory reporting (ELR) to Public Health Services Epidemiology Program (Epidemiology).
- **Influenza deaths:** Hospital infection control professionals report influenza-related deaths. Pediatric flu deaths (under 18 years of age) are legally reportable in California; however, San Diego County requests that all influenza-related deaths be reported for surveillance purposes. Influenza-related deaths are also identified through death certificate registration. The County Office of Vital Records notifies Epidemiology when a new death is registered with influenza listed as a cause of death or underlying condition. In addition, influenza case reports are compared to death data for San Diego County, and matches are evaluated to determine if their influenza infection was related to the cause of death.
- **Percent pneumonia and influenza deaths:** The percentage of all deaths registered that had either pneumonia and/or influenza listed as a cause of death is obtained directly from the Vital Records VRIS data system on a weekly basis.
- **Influenza-like illness (ILI):** Electronic emergency department (ED) visit data is submitted to Epidemiology daily, and the number of all ILI chief complaints and total visits are used to calculate the ED ILI percentage for each week. ILI is defined as fever (>100°F or 37.8°C) and cough and/or sore throat, in the absence of a known cause.
- **Influenza outbreaks:** In a congregate living setting, outbreaks are defined as at least one laboratory-confirmed influenza in the setting of a cluster (≥2 cases) of influenza-like illness (ILI) within a 72-hour period. Influenza outbreaks are reportable in California. Epidemiology identifies outbreaks when facilities call to report. Other potential outbreaks are identified when multiple cases share an address or have a residential address that matches a skilled nursing or long-term care facility.
- **Number of vaccines:** The San Diego Immunization Registry (SDIR) provides weekly updates on the number of flu vaccinations given based on the number of flu vaccinations registered by participating providers.