Virus WAtch
Week ending 08th March 2020

Key Points

Influenza and influenza-like illnesses (ILI)

- **Summary**: Indicators of influenza activity varied in the level of activity reported.
- ILI activity at sentinel GPs remained low in the previous weeks.
- ILI presentations and admissions at sentinel EDs increased in the past week and presentations were higher than expected for this time of year.
- Influenza notifications and PathWest test percent positivity were at levels usually reported at this time of year.
- Influenza A accounted for (83%) influenza cases at PathWest in the past week, comprising 61% A/H1, 17% A/H3 and 5% untyped. Influenza B accounted for 17% of cases.
- Non-influenza activity in increased in the past week, possibly due to increased demand for COVID-19 virus testing.

Gastroenteritis

- The rate of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel GPs and sentinel EDs remained in the range of levels normally reported at this time of year.
- PathWest laboratory detections of norovirus were low in the past week, and rotavirus notifications remained at low levels.

Other vaccine-preventable diseases

- **Shingles and chickenpox**: Chickenpox and shingles presentations reported by WA ASPREN GPs this week were above baseline levels. The number of chickenpox and shingles presentations to sentinel EDs were above baseline levels.
- **Measles**: No measles cases were notified in the past week.
- **Mumps**: One mumps case was notified in the past week.
- **Rubella**: No rubella cases notified in the past week.
- **Invasive meningococcal disease (IMD)**: No IMD cases was notified in the past week.

Other diseases

- **Coronavirus COVID-19**: Nine COVID-19 cases were diagnosed in WA this week. To date, there have been 14 confirmed cases; all were either acquired overseas or linked to a person who had travelled overseas. See [webpage](http://www2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/F_Infectious-disease-data/Virus-WAtch) for further information.

*these samples were tested using a rapid testing method that does not determine the influenza subtype (i.e influenza A/H3N2 or A/H1N1).
Influenza and influenza-like illnesses

The number of routine PathWest influenza detections increased in the past week and there were no samples submitted for influenza testing by sentinel GPs.

The rate of ILI presentations to sentinel GPs in the past week was in the mid-range of levels usually reported during this time of year.
The following is a summary of current Emergency Department Sentinel Surveillance (EDSS) data for respiratory viral presentations.

Respiratory viral presentations and admissions to sentinel EDs increased in the past week.

The number of respiratory viral presentations to sentinel EDs increased in the past week and is above levels usually reported during this time of year.

*The graph is a summary of presentations at Emergency Department Sentinel Surveillance (EDSS) sites 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.
Influenza notifications reported to the Department of Health in the past week remained similar to the seasonal threshold.

The graph is a summary of all influenza notifications received by the DoH, Western Australia to the end of the current reporting week, for which cases had date of symptom onset or specimen collection between 02/03/2020 and 08/03/2020. 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.

The percentage of specimens positive for influenza virus at PathWest was at levels usually reported at this time of year. Of 988 specimens submitted, 42 (4%) tested positive in the past week.

The graph is a summary of all WA samples reported by PathWest, excluding samples referred by other private laboratories for influenza subtyping.
42 positive samples were reported by PathWest in the past week which included 35 influenza A and seven influenza B. Of the 35 influenza A samples, 26 were A/H1N1, seven were A/H3N2 and two were untyped*.

The graph is a summary of all WA samples positive for influenza reported at PathWest, excluding samples referred by other private laboratories for influenza subtyping. *These samples were tested using a rapid testing method that does not determine the influenza subtype (i.e. influenza A/H3N2 or A/H1N1).

Overall non-influenza activity increased in the past week. This increase may be due to patients who would not normally be tested for respiratory viruses but are now being tested as part of a screen that includes COVID-19.

The graph is a summary of all WA samples positive for a common respiratory virus other than influenza reported at PathWest.
The rate of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel GPs increased in the last week and is in the lower range of levels normally reported at this time of year.

Gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel EDs in the past week were similar to baseline levels and admissions were above baseline levels.

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, 2014 to week 52, 2018.
The number of gastroenteritis presentations to sentinel EDs increased in the past week and is in the mid range of values normally reported at this time of year.

**Viral rashes**

The chickenpox and shingles presentations reported by WA ASPREN GPs this week were above the baseline.

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, 2014 to week 52, 2018.
The following is a summary of current Emergency Department sentinel surveillance (EDSS) data for varicella-zoster virus presentations.

The number of chickenpox and shingles presentations to sentinel EDs in the past week were higher than baseline levels.

Baseline levels for varicella-zoster virus presentations were calculated using the mean of weekly EDIS data from week 1, 2014 to week 52, 2018.

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