



**Austin Public Health  
Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Unit**



**Travis County Influenza Surveillance**

**Summary** – Season 2017-2018 (as of December 14, 2017).

**Travis County influenza and influenza-like illness (ILI) activity:**

- As of December 14, 2017, influenza activity in Travis has increased slightly since the start of this season. The most frequently identified influenza virus type reported has been influenza A.
- Two influenza-associated deaths have been reported in Travis County during this season. There have been no influenza-associated pediatric deaths.
- Two outbreaks of influenza were reported, one during week 4 and the other during week 11.
- While influenza B viruses have dominated the early season, the past four weeks have shown an increase in influenza A. This year's vaccine is a good match to the circulating influenza strains.
- PCR testing is performed for specimens referred by area sentinel Influenza surveillance reporters. Providers interested in becoming sentinel providers may call the Austin Public Health - Epidemiology and Disease Surveillance Unit at (512) 972-5555.
- CDC recommends annual vaccination for everyone  $\geq 6$  months old. It is not too late to get the vaccine for the 2017-2018 influenza season. You can get the flu more than once during a season. If you have not received your flu vaccination yet, you should get vaccinated now.



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### Texas influenza activity (as of December 2, 2017 – MMWR week 48):

- Influenza activity has increased across the state of Texas.
- The percentage of patient visits due to influenza-like illness (ILI) and the percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza reported by public health laboratories has slightly increased.
- The percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza reported by hospital laboratories has marginally decreased.
- No influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported.
- Three influenza-associated outbreaks were reported
- In addition to flu, other respiratory viruses - especially respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) - were detected in Texas during the past weeks.

### Preventive Actions:

- The CDC recommends that anyone six months of age and older should be vaccinated for the flu every flu season. Individuals who are at high risk are especially advised to be vaccinated. High risk individuals are as follows:
  - Persons 65 years of age and older
  - Pregnant women
  - Individuals with certain chronic medical conditions, including diabetes, asthma, heart and lung disease
  - Health care workers
  - Individuals who live with and/or care for high risk individuals
- In addition to the vaccine, there are certain preventive measures an individual can take to prevent the flu:
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap is not available.
  - Practice proper sneezing and coughing measures. Avoid touching your nose, mouth and eyes.
  - Avoid coming into contact with an individual who is sick.
- If you are sick, stay home until you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. CDC also recommends prompt treatment with influenza antiviral drugs for people who are very sick with flu and people who are at high risk of flu complications who get flu.

***Although these preventive actions are highly recommended they do not take the place of the flu vaccine.***

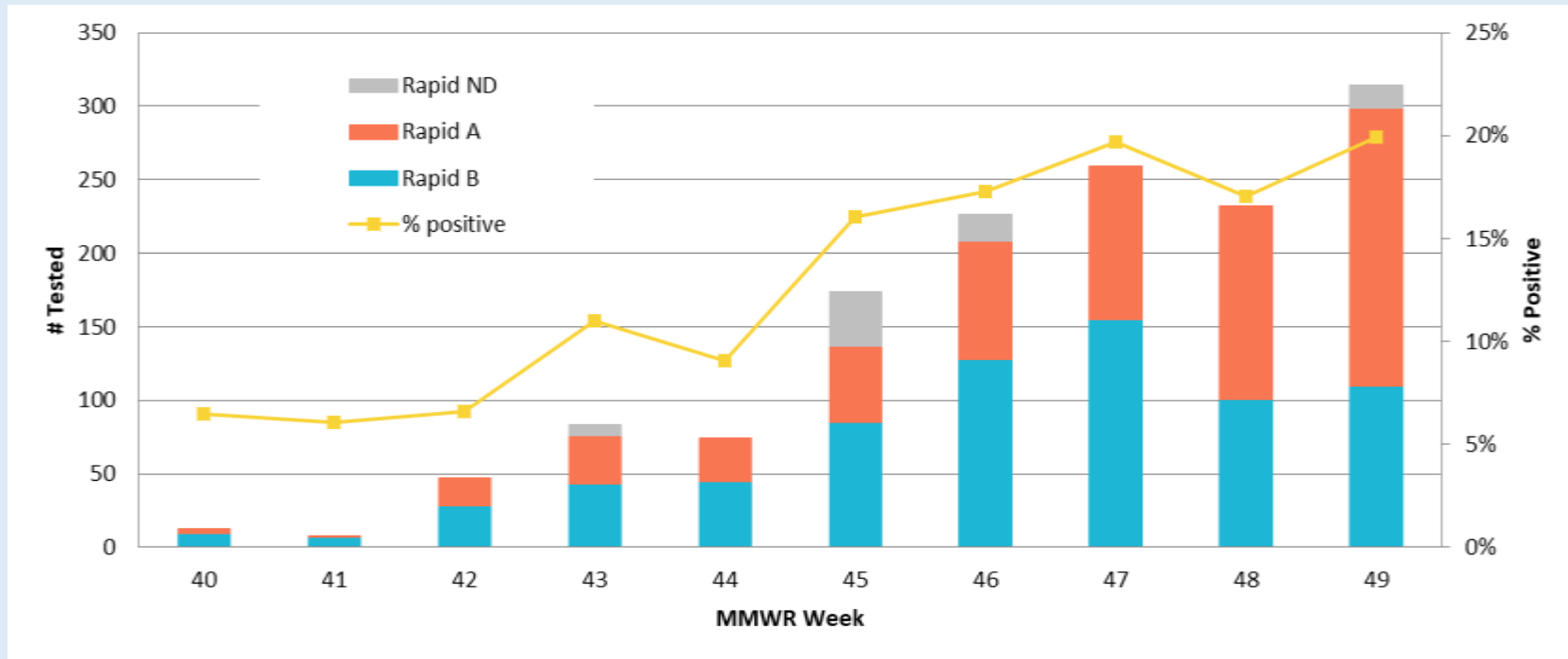
Austin/Travis County influenza surveillance does not attempt to capture all cases of influenza or influenza-like illness. These data should be used for trending purposes over time and for identifying types/strains of influenza that are occurring in the Austin area rather than for estimating the total number of cases.



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**Figure 1. Influenza Surveillance for the last 10 weeks, Travis County Providers<sup>1,2,3</sup>**



Data source: Austin/Travis County Influenza surveillance reporters

Week Ending	10/7/17	10/14/17	10/21/17	10/28/17	11/4/17	11/11/17	11/18/17	11/25/17	12/2/17	12/9/17
MMWR <sup>4</sup> Week	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49
# Influenza Rapid Tests Performed	200	132	709	753	817	1082	1309	1314	1362	1574
# Total Positive Influenza Rapid Tests	13	8	47	83	74	174	226	259	232	314
% Positive Influenza Tests	6.5%	6.1%	6.6%	11.0%	9.1%	16.1%	17.3%	19.7%	17.0%	19.9%
# Positive A Influenza	4	1	19	33	29	52	80	104	131	189
# Positive B Influenza	9	7	28	43	45	85	128	155	101	110

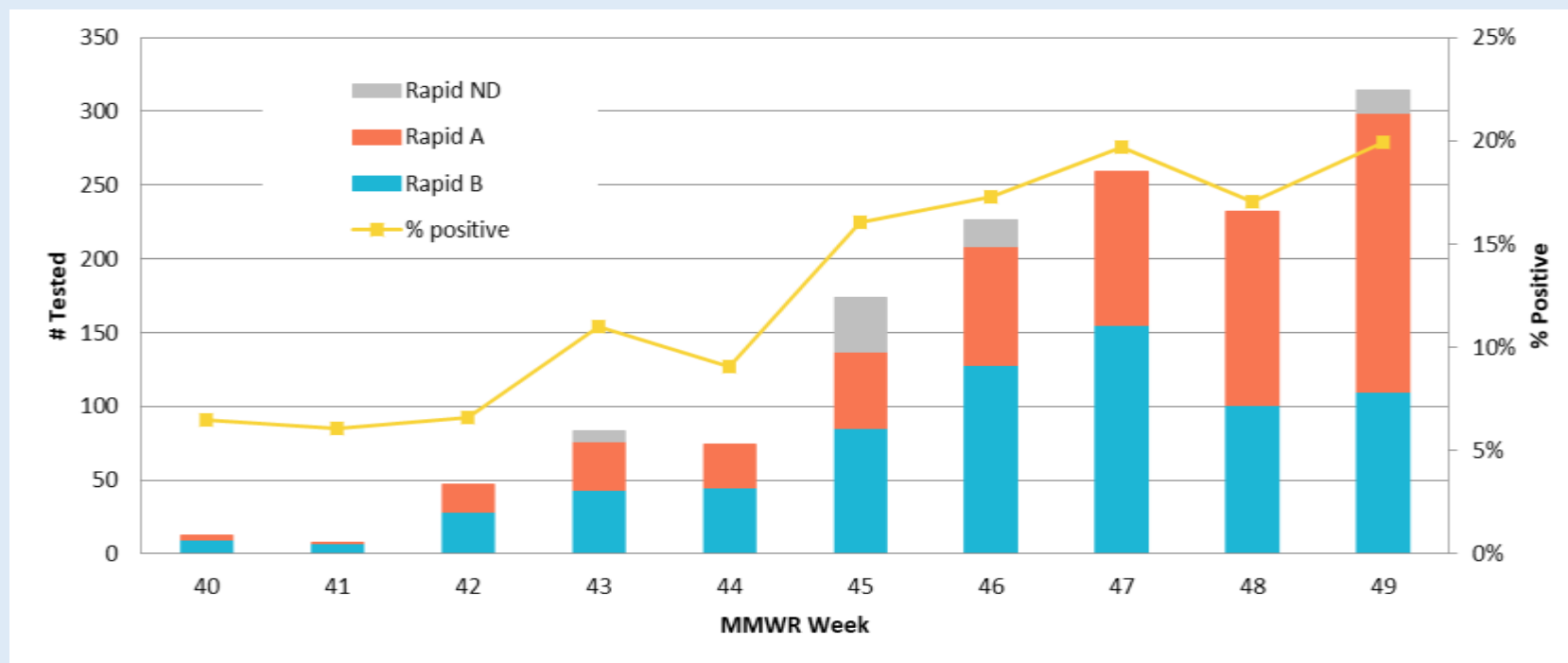
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**Figure 2. Number Tested and Percent Positive Rapid Influenza tests by Week,  
Travis County: 2017-2018 Influenza Season <sup>1,2,3,5</sup>**



Data source: Austin/Travis County Influenza surveillance reporters

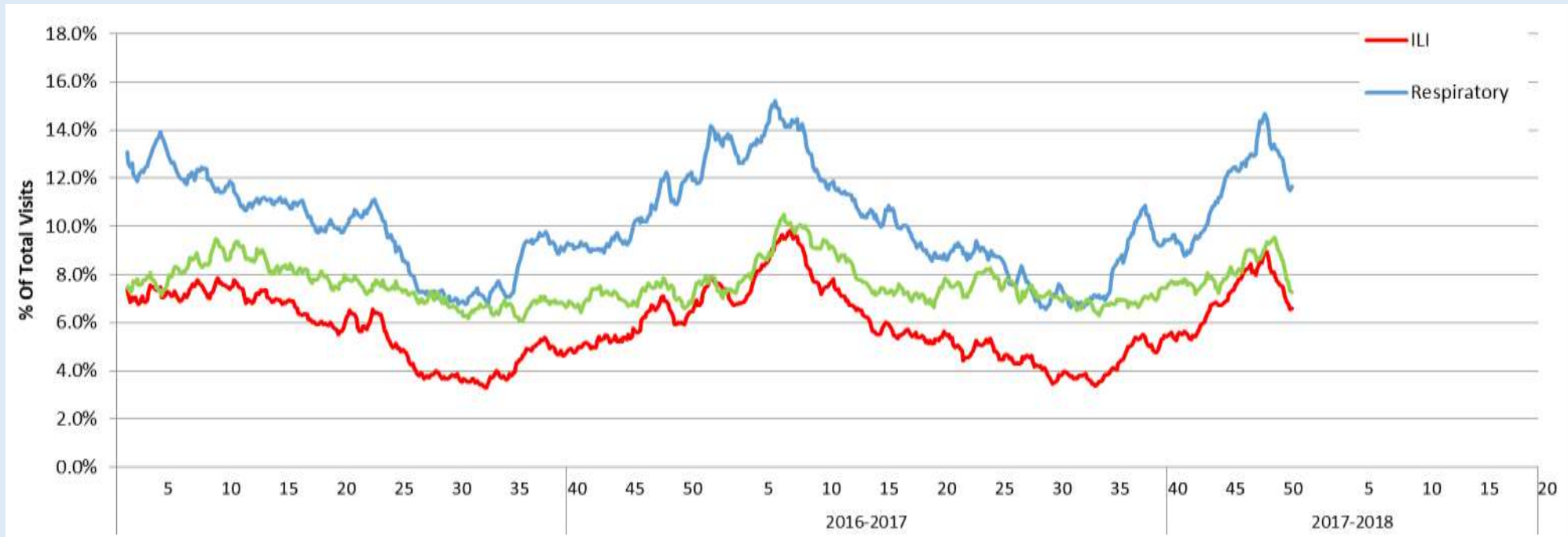
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**Figure 3. Real-time Outbreak and Disease Surveillance Data, Travis County: 2015-2017**



Data source: University of Pittsburgh Real-time Outbreak and Disease Surveillance System (RODS). Data is an aggregation of Austin area chief complaint hospital data

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### For additional information about Influenza surveillance, contact:

*The Austin/Travis County Health and Human Services Epidemiology and Health Statistics Unit at (512) 972-5555*

#### **Other Helpful Resources:**

*Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)*

*<http://www.texasflu.org/>*

*World Health Organization (WHO)*

*<http://www.who.int/influenza/en/>*

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

*<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>*

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<sup>1</sup> Influenza is not a reportable condition in Texas; therefore, data is provided by sentinel surveillance reporters and is only a sample of the Influenza activity occurring in the Austin/Travis County area

<sup>2</sup> Data represent rapid Influenza testing; these tests provide quick results reporting only Influenza A or B (no subtyping). Early in the flu season, results should be used with caution due to false positive results which can occur, especially during times when Influenza activity is low

<sup>3</sup> Influenza data is collected from a variety of reporters; the number of reporters can vary from week to week

<sup>4</sup> MMWR is the Morbidity and Mortality weekly report week published by the CDC

<sup>5</sup> Data for Austin/Travis County ILI reporters only; the number of reporters can vary from week to week