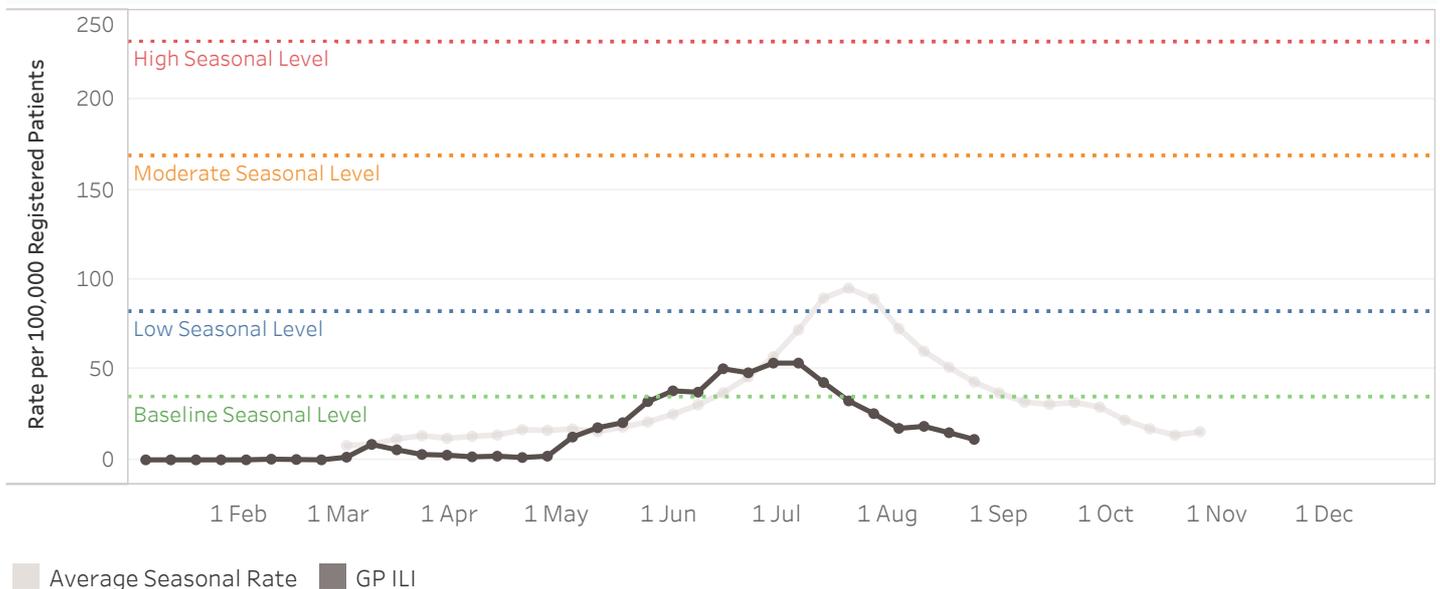


## Week Ending 25 August 2019

### National Overview

Influenza-like illness (ILI) activity continues to decline below the seasonal baseline threshold this week. The rate of people presenting to general practices (GP) with ILI who test positive for influenza virus also remains below the seasonal baseline threshold. Less than 50% of samples tested in GP clinics have been positive for influenza in the past few weeks, which supports an overall decline in circulating influenza viruses. Currently, influenza A(H3N2) and B/Victoria viruses are co-circulating in the community, but influenza A viruses are still predominating in hospitals. Recent virology reports suggest a mutation in the B/Victoria strains circulating in New Zealand during the 2019 season. This is expected to reduce the vaccine effectiveness for this influenza virus strain.

### Weekly General Practice Influenza-like Illness (ILI) Rates To 25 Aug 19

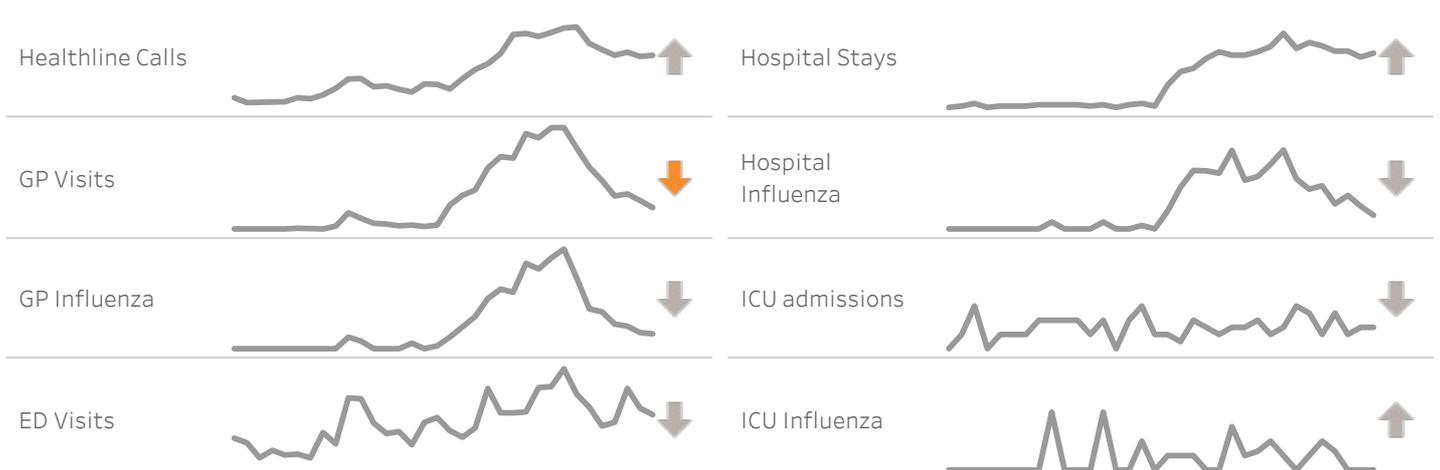


National indicators of community influenza-like illness (ILI) activity remain low this week. There has also been a statistically significant decline in people presenting to their GPs with ILI in the past week. There was one ILI outbreak reported this week in MidCentral DHB in a long term care facility.

Indicators of severity remain low. Severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) surveillance started on April 29th, but surveillance in intensive care units (ICU) for very severe or unusual presentations is year round. Activity in ICU is low. The rate of influenza-positive SARI dropped below the seasonal baseline level this week (see Hospitalisation Rates tab).

Arrow colour indicates whether the current weekly change is statistically significant.

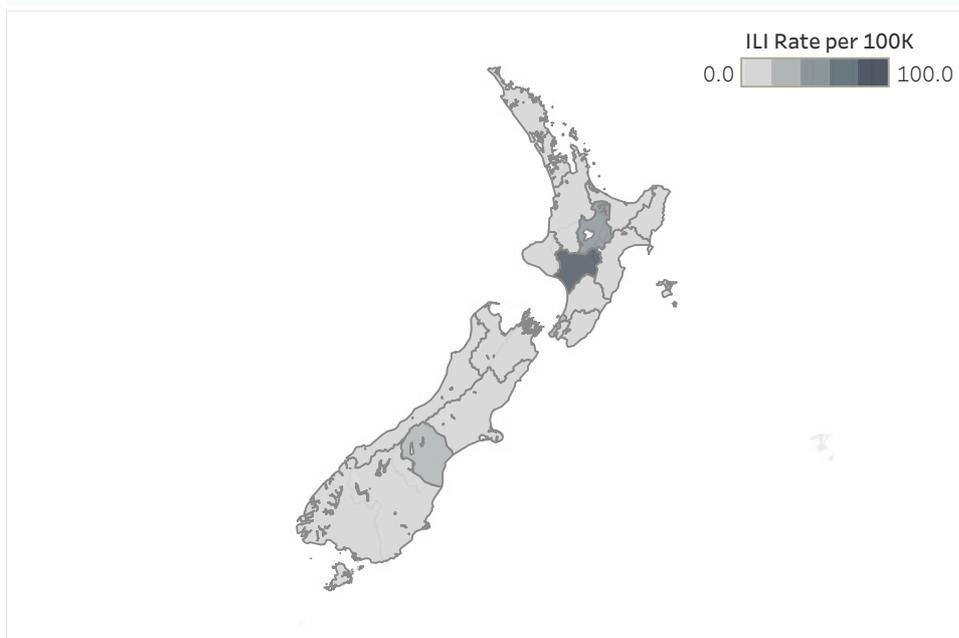
Arrow colour indicates whether the current weekly change is statistically significant.



## Activity by DHB

The national rate of General Practice (GP) visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) remains below the seasonal baseline level, declining further in the past week. Lakes and South Canterbury DHBs have recorded the highest ILI GP visit rates this week. Healthline calls for ILI also decreased this week compared to the previous week. MidCentral and Hutt Valley DHBs had the highest rates of Healthline calls for ILI this week.

## GP Visits (ILI) Rate by DHB - Current Week



## Control Measures

The 2019 publically funded seasonal Influenza vaccine contains the following four components (i.e. a quadrivalent vaccine):

- an A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Switzerland/8060/2017 (H3N2)-like virus;
- a B/Colorado/06/2017-like virus (B/Victoria/2/87 lineage); and
- a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (B/Yamagata/16/88 lineage).

## Overseas acute respiratory disease surveillance

- Pacific region: In Australia, early, high seasonal influenza and influenza-like illness (ILI) activity has been declining through July and August and is now below the average for this time of year compared to previous years.<sup>1,2</sup> Over recent surveillance weeks, activity increased in Queensland, Tasmania, the Top End of the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory, while it decreased in all other states and territories. Nationally, influenza A(H3N2) virus continues to predominate, with the proportion of influenza B cases slightly increasing in the past fortnight. Clinical severity for the season to date is low. Influenza outbreaks continue to be reported in several Pacific Island Countries and Territories: influenza A and B in New Caledonia and influenza B in French Polynesia.<sup>3</sup>
- Asia: Influenza activity remained low in Southern Asia.<sup>1</sup> Activity decreased or remained low in South East Asia, except in Myanmar where detections remained high (A(H1N1)pdm09 predominance). Activity decreased in Thailand (A(H3N2) and B/Victoria-lineage viruses co-circulating).
- South and Central America: Activity decreased across temperate South America, with all seasonal influenza subtypes co-circulating.<sup>1</sup> Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 slightly increased in Uruguay. Overall activity remained low in tropical South America and Central America.
- Africa: Low influenza activity was reported across most of Africa, with the exception of a few countries in Eastern Africa.<sup>1</sup> Activity continued to decrease in South Africa, with A(H3N2) predominance.
- Northern Hemisphere: Currently low influenza activity overall.<sup>1</sup>
- Emerging diseases: In 2019, ongoing detections of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in the Middle East and human infection with avian Influenza A(H7N9), A(H9N2) and A(H5N6) in China have been reported (associated with exposures to camels and birds, respectively).<sup>4,5</sup> These emerging viruses (MERS-CoV, A(H7N9), A(H9N2) and A(H5N6)) are not known to spread easily from person-to-person at present and are classified by the WHO as being of low risk of international spread. The latest annual global risk assessment of MERS-CoV by the WHO found the overall epidemiology, clinical presentation, transmission patterns and viral characteristics remain unchanged since the previous risk assessment.<sup>6</sup> However, there is expected to be increased travel to Saudi Arabia during the Hajj pilgrimage, 9-14 August.

Further information on overseas acute respiratory disease activity:

1. WHO Global Flu Update: [www.who.int/influenza/surveillance\\_monitoring/updates/latest\\_update\\_GIP\\_surveillance/en/](http://www.who.int/influenza/surveillance_monitoring/updates/latest_update_GIP_surveillance/en/) (accessed 28/08/19)
2. Australia: [www.health.gov.au/flureport](http://www.health.gov.au/flureport) (accessed 28/08/2019)
3. Pacific: [www.spc.int/phd/epidemics/](http://www.spc.int/phd/epidemics/) (accessed 28/08/19 – report not updated since 23/8/19)
4. WHO Emergency Preparedness, response: [www.who.int/csr/don/archive/year/2019/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/don/archive/year/2019/en/) (accessed 28/08/19)
5. WHO Avian and other zoonotic influenza: [www.who.int/influenza/human\\_animal\\_interface/en/](http://www.who.int/influenza/human_animal_interface/en/) (accessed 28/08/19)
6. WHO Global Summary and Assessment of Risk: <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/326126/WHO-MERS-RA-19.1-eng.pdf?ua=1> (accessed 28/08/19)
7. Hong Kong Department of Health: [https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/2019\\_avian\\_influenza\\_report\\_vol15\\_wk33.pdf](https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/2019_avian_influenza_report_vol15_wk33.pdf) (accessed 28/08/2019)