TARRANT VIRAL WATCH

February 2026 Newsletter

TARRANT News & Updates

Greetings sentinels,

We are mid-way through the 2025-26 respiratory virus season, which has been quite eventful so far. To all our new sentinels who joined us in the past month – welcome! We are thankful to all sentinels for their diligence in submitting swabs to Tarrant so far this year, as we received over 400 swabs in December alone.

Season update

As many primary care physicians experienced in practice, this season has been characterized by an unusually high influenza A H3N2 peak, with 46% of swabs testing positive throughout December (Figure 1, Table 1). Since then, influenza A positivity has decreased substantially, and influenza B positivity has begun to increase a little earlier than in previous seasons. At this point, we also usually would have seen weekly RSV case positivity rates above 10% lasting from mid-December to January, but positivity has remained low so far and only peaked above 10% in the beginning of February.

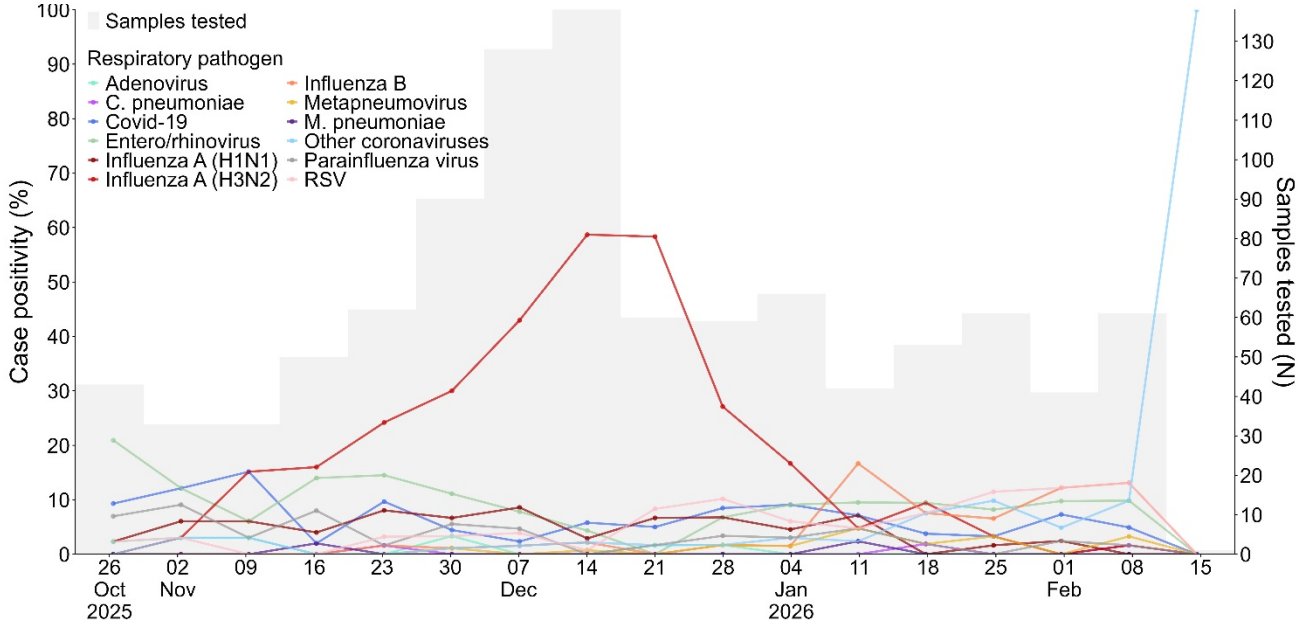
		Case positivity (# positive)											
Month	**Samples tested (N)**	**Influenza A (H1N1)**	**Influenza A (H3N2)**	**Influenza B**	**RSV**	**Covid-19**	**Other coronaviruses**	**Parainfluenza virus**	**Meta-pneumovirus**	**Entero/ rhinovirus**	**Adenovirus**	**Chlamydia pneumoniae**	**Mycoplasma pneumoniae**
November 2025	183	6.0% (11)	15.8% (29)	0.5% (1)	1.6% (3)	9.8% (18)	1.1% (2)	5.5% (10)	0.0% (0)	12.0% (22)	1.1% (2)	0.5% (1)	0.5% (1)
December 2025	457	6.1% (28)	46.0% (210)	1.3% (6)	3.5% (16)	5.0% (23)	1.8% (8)	2.8% (13)	0.4% (2)	6.6% (30)	1.1% (5)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
January 2026	239	3.3% (8)	10.0% (24)	7.1% (17)	8.8% (21)	5.4% (13)	5.4% (13)	2.1% (5)	2.9% (7)	8.4% (20)	0.0% (0)	0.4% (1)	0.4% (1)
February 2026	103	1.0% (1)	1.0% (1)	12.6% (13)	12.6% (13)	5.8% (6)	8.7% (9)	1.9% (2)	1.9% (2)	9.7% (10)	1.0% (1)	1.0% (1)	0.0% (0)
Total	***640***	***4.9% (48)***	***26.9% (264)***	***3.8% (37)***	***5.4% (53)***	***6.1% (60)***	***3.3% (32)***	***3.1% (30)***	***1.1% (11)***	***8.4% (82)***	***0.8% (8)***	***0.3% (3)***	***0.2% (2)***

Table 1: Monthly case positivity and positive cases of respiratory pathogens reported to Tarrant

Figure 1: Weekly case positivity of respiratory pathogens and total number of samples submitted weekly to Tarrant

Your data goes to Geneva!

The interim analysis of vaccine effectiveness this season, as published recently in Eurosurveillance, will be one of the sets of information used in the WHO Meeting that decides



next year's vaccine composition, to occur in this last week of February.

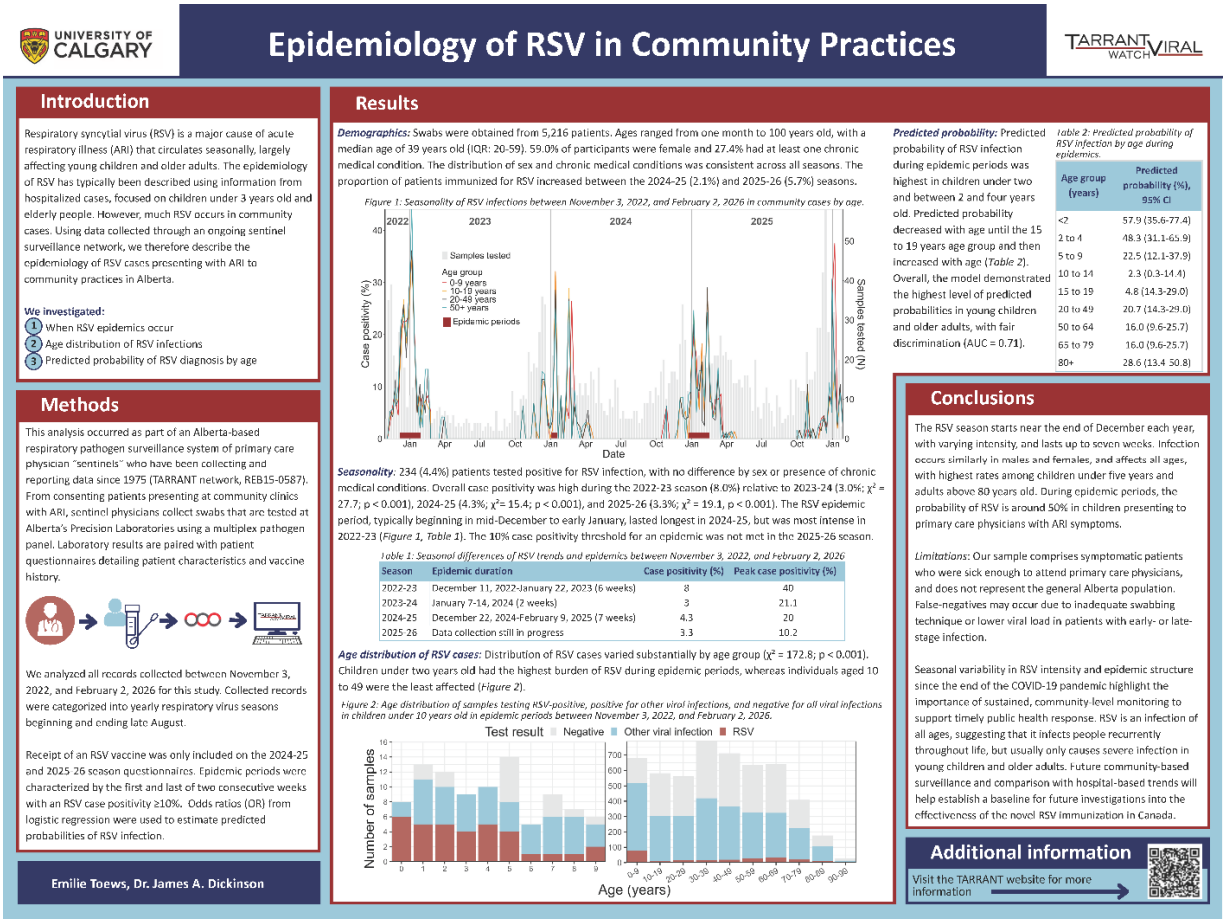
Dr. Danuta Skowronski, from the BCCDC, is the team leader for the four-province Sentinel Practitioner Surveillance Network (SPSN). Last week she gave a presentation on this season's results, showing the connections between the viral structures, the immunological responses and how vaccine effects vary with age, because of the prior experience of different cohorts of people. While this has little clinical significance, it is quite intellectually fascinating, and can be found at the BCCDC grand rounds website for those who are interested:
https://nexuswebcast.mediasite.com/mediasite/Showcase/bc-cdc-showcase

Virus highlight: Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

After analyzing data from the 5,216 swabs submitted to Tarrant since November 2021, we found 234 cases (4.4%) that tested positive for RSV. Epidemic periods - where weekly case positivity exceeds 10% for two or more consecutive weeks – typically began in mid- to late-December, lasting several weeks into the new year. However, we are only just now seeing the 10% threshold being met in the 2025-26 season, which began in the last week of January and is currently ongoing.

Overall, there was no difference in infection by sex or the presence of chronic medical conditions, but a distinct trend in RSV infection by age. During epidemic periods, the probability of having RSV is about 50% for children under 4-years old who present to their primary care physician with acute respiratory illness. This probability of infection decreases with age until adulthood, when it begins to increase again, with a 28.6% probability of infection in individuals 80-years old and older.

For more information on these results, please review our poster "*Epidemiology of RSV in Community Practices"*, which will also be presented at the upcoming 2026 Family Medicine Summit on March 6 in Calgary.



Sentinel Payments

We are processing swab payouts for the 2025 calendar year and expect that payments should be made to you by the end of the month. For those who we have reached out to complete payment forms, please return them so we can proceed with the Medical Faculty payment process.

Farewell Anamika and welcome back, Aunshu

Anamika Kambo worked with us on a short-term contract and has now moved on to her Nursing Degree. Thanks, Anamika, for all your hard work!

Finally, we are welcoming back Aunshu Goyal, a long-time member of the Tarrant team who has been away on maternity leave. We are pleased to have her back on the team as we move forward with many exciting things this season!

Kind regards,

The Tarrant Viral Watch Team