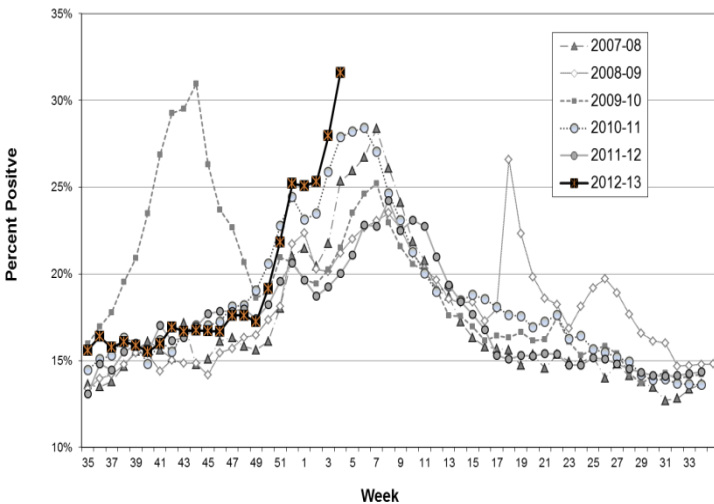


## Influenza Continues to Increase in Los Angeles County

Respiratory illness in Emergency Departments (ED) and laboratory-confirmed influenza have continued to rise in Los Angeles County (LAC) and are at the highest levels seen in the past 4 years (Figures 1 and 3). During week 4 there were increasing reports of outbreaks of respiratory illness in the community (Table 1). Most influenza in LAC is influenza A H3, the predominant virus across the country. This strain is associated with a high rate of hospitalization in people  $\geq 65$  years old in the United States and we see that in LAC data: of the 7 confirmed deaths thus far, 6 are  $\geq 65$  years old. Several of the deaths had influenza with secondary bacterial infections and clinicians may be interested in a [recent article in JAMA](#) which reviews bacterial co-infections in influenza and the proper diagnosis and treatment for these infections. Influenza-like illness activity continues to be high across the nation and in California (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>). Public Health continues to encourage vaccination as the single most effective preventive measure against infection or severe illness due to influenza.

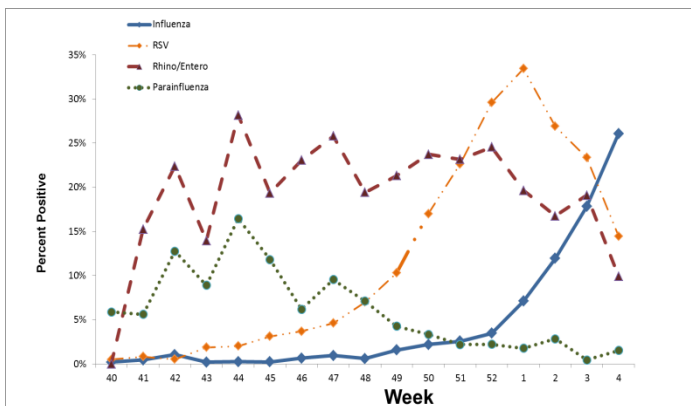
**Figure 1: Respiratory Illness ED Visits in LA County (2007-2013)**  
Percent Positive Visits by MMWR Surveillance Week



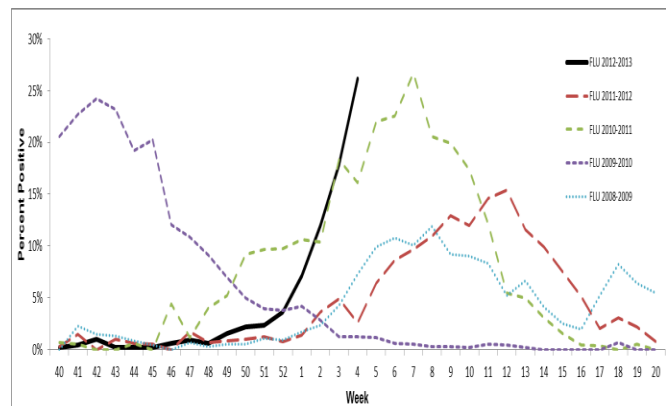
**Table 1: Surveillance Summary for LA County (2012-2013)**  
MMWR Surveillance Week 4

LA County Surveillance Summary	Week 4	2012-2013 Season YTD
Positive Flu Tests / Total Tests (Percent Positive Flu Tests)	483/1851 (26.1%)	
Percent Flu A / B	84/16	
Positive RSV Tests / Total Tests (Percent Positive RSV Tests)	206/1425 (14.5%)	
Community Respiratory Outbreaks, Reported	18	28
Flu Deaths, Confirmed (Pediatric Flu Deaths, Confirmed)		7 (0)

**Figure 2: Respiratory Viruses in LA County (2012-2013)**  
Percent Positive Lab Reports by MMWR Surveillance Week



**Figure 3: Influenza in LA County (2008-2013)**  
Percent Positive Lab Reports by MMWR Surveillance Week



As seen in Figure 2 above, both rhinovirus and RSV are decreasing while the prevalence of influenza is increasing. We have seen this pattern in previous years: when influenza rises the relative prevalence of other viruses significantly lowers. See archived issues of Influenza Watch, Season Summaries: [http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Flu\\_Sea\\_Archive.htm](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Flu_Sea_Archive.htm).

The percent of respiratory specimens positive for influenza has risen sharply in the past 4 weeks. Note that the data come from a mix of laboratories from community and academic hospitals and include both PCR and rapid test results. However, all labs saw a significant increase in the number of tests performed. These data must be considered provisional because some laboratories may file amended reports in upcoming weeks.