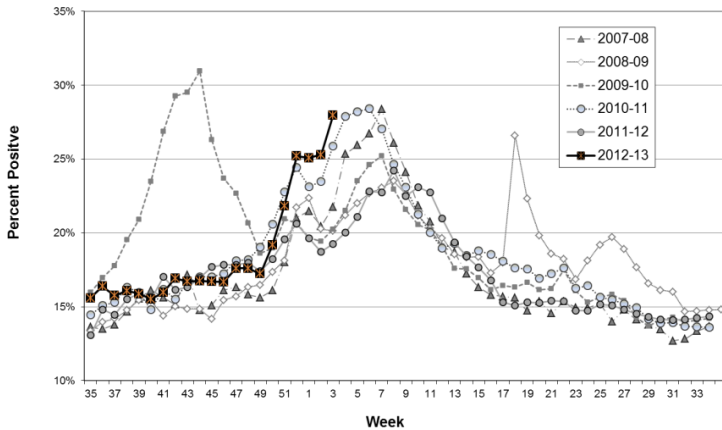


## Influenza Increasing in Los Angeles County

Respiratory illness in Emergency Departments (ED) and laboratory-confirmed influenza have continued to rise in Los Angeles County (LAC) though RSV is falling (Table 1, Figures 1&2). There are increasing reports of outbreaks of respiratory illness in schools (Table 1). Historically we have seen high levels of influenza at this time of year but what characterizes this season is a sharp rise in laboratory confirmed influenza over 3 weeks (Figure 3). Most influenza in LAC is influenza A H3N2, the predominant virus across the country. An [article](#) published this week in the New England Journal of Medicine underscores that influenza epidemics are expected but unpredictable; in Figure 3 the LAC data reveals the diversity of “influenza” seasons in just the past 5 years. Influenza-like illness activity continues to be high across the nation and in California (see <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>). Since we have not yet hit our peak for influenza, Public Health continues to encourage vaccination as the single most effective preventive measure against infection or severe illness due to influenza.

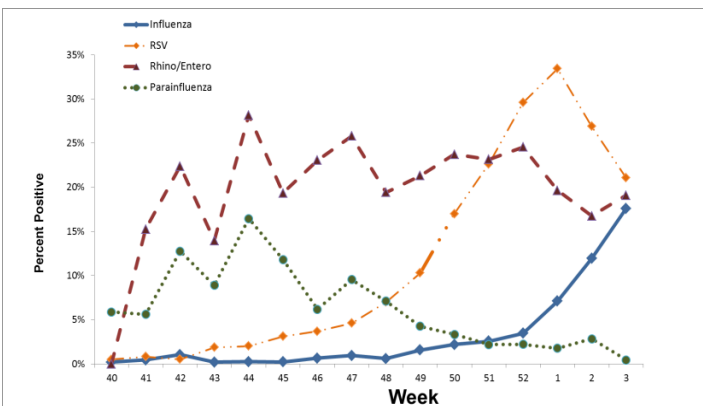
**Figure 1: Respiratory Illness ED Visits in LA County (2007-2013)**  
Percent Positive Visits by MMWR Surveillance Week



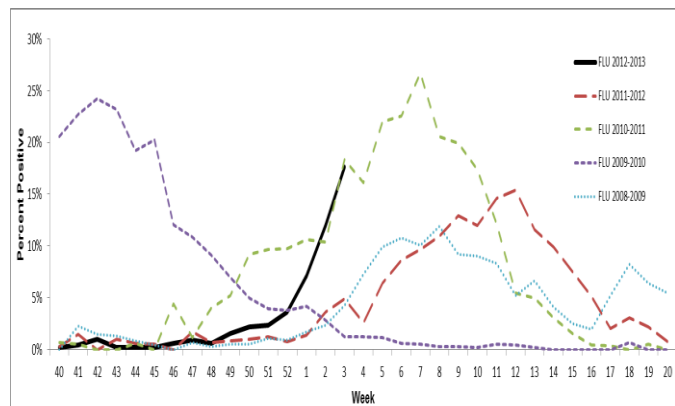
**Table 1: Surveillance Summary for LA County (2012-2013)**  
MMWR Surveillance Week 3

LA County Surveillance Summary	Week 3	2012-2013 Season YTD
Positive Flu Tests / Total Tests (Percent Positive Flu Tests)	218/1238 (17.6%)	
Percent Flu A / B	83/17	
Positive RSV Tests / Total Tests (Percent Positive RSV Tests)	201/954 (21.1%)	
Community Respiratory Outbreaks, Reported	5	9
Flu Deaths, Confirmed (Pediatric Flu Deaths, Confirmed)		4 (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, the level of RSV detections has decreased in the past week to levels normally seen at this time of year. Influenza is rising to a level consistent with the moderately severe influenza season of 2010-2011 (see Figure 3). Rhinovirus (associated with the “common cold”) has stabilized.

The percent of respiratory specimens positive for influenza has risen sharply in the past 3 weeks. Note that the data come from a mix of laboratories from community and academic hospitals and include both PCR and rapid test results. Despite the variation in sources of data, all contributing laboratories were consistent in reporting a prevalence of influenza at 15-25%.

