

3 SEASONAL DISEASES

a Influenza

Although the 2017 influenza season has not yet started, sporadic detections of influenza have been made during the first three weeks of May. All were identified as influenza A(H3N2), which is the strain that predominated during the 2016/17 northern hemisphere season. Three detections were from the Western Cape Province and one from Gauteng Province. Influenza-like illness surveillance data over the past 33 years has shown that the South African influenza season usually commences in epidemiological week 22, which is the last week of May/first week of June).

Influenza vaccine has been available since the end of March. As it takes approximately two weeks to develop immunity, the vaccine should be given sufficiently early to provide protection for the influenza season, though it is never too late to

vaccinate. Healthcare workers should recommend influenza vaccination to their patients, especially those at risk for severe influenza illness or complications. Individuals at risk of influenza and severe disease include pregnant women and those who are vulnerable due to pre-existing illnesses or risk factors. Guidelines are available at: [Influenza Guidelines 2017](#)

The 2017 RSV season which started in week 7 (week starting 13 February) continues, although the numbers testing positive and detection rate have started to decrease (Figure 2).

Source: Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis, NICD-NHLS; (cherylc@nicd.ac.za)

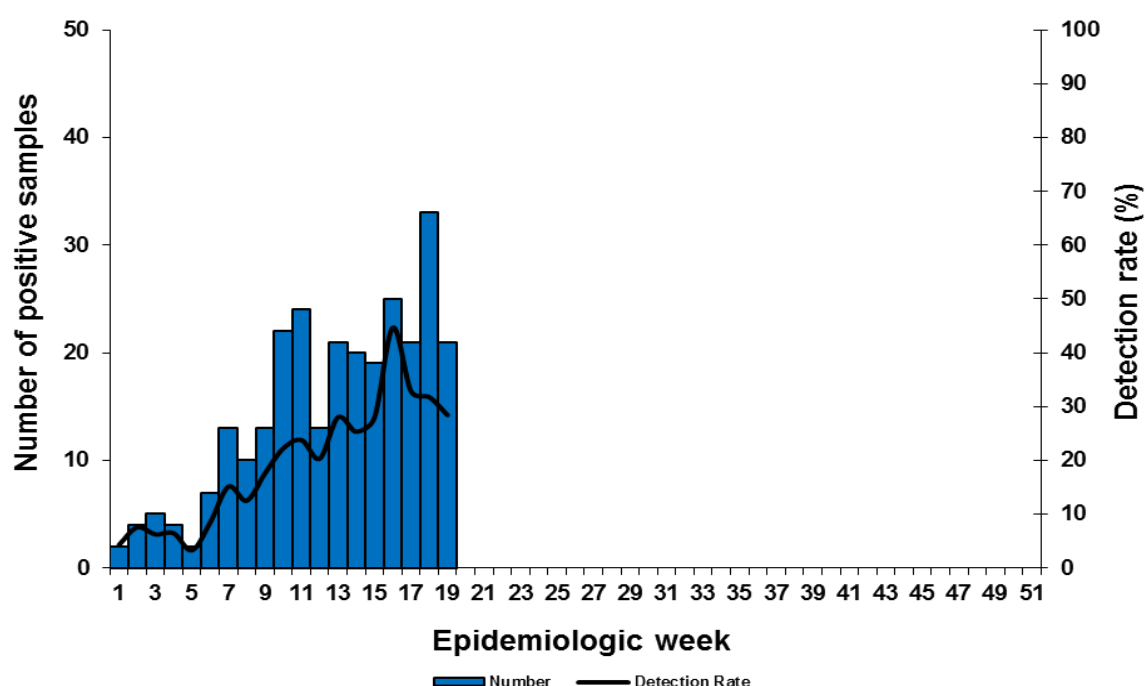


Figure 2. RSV detections and detection rate per week as identified by pneumonia surveillance at sentinel sites in the public sector, 2017