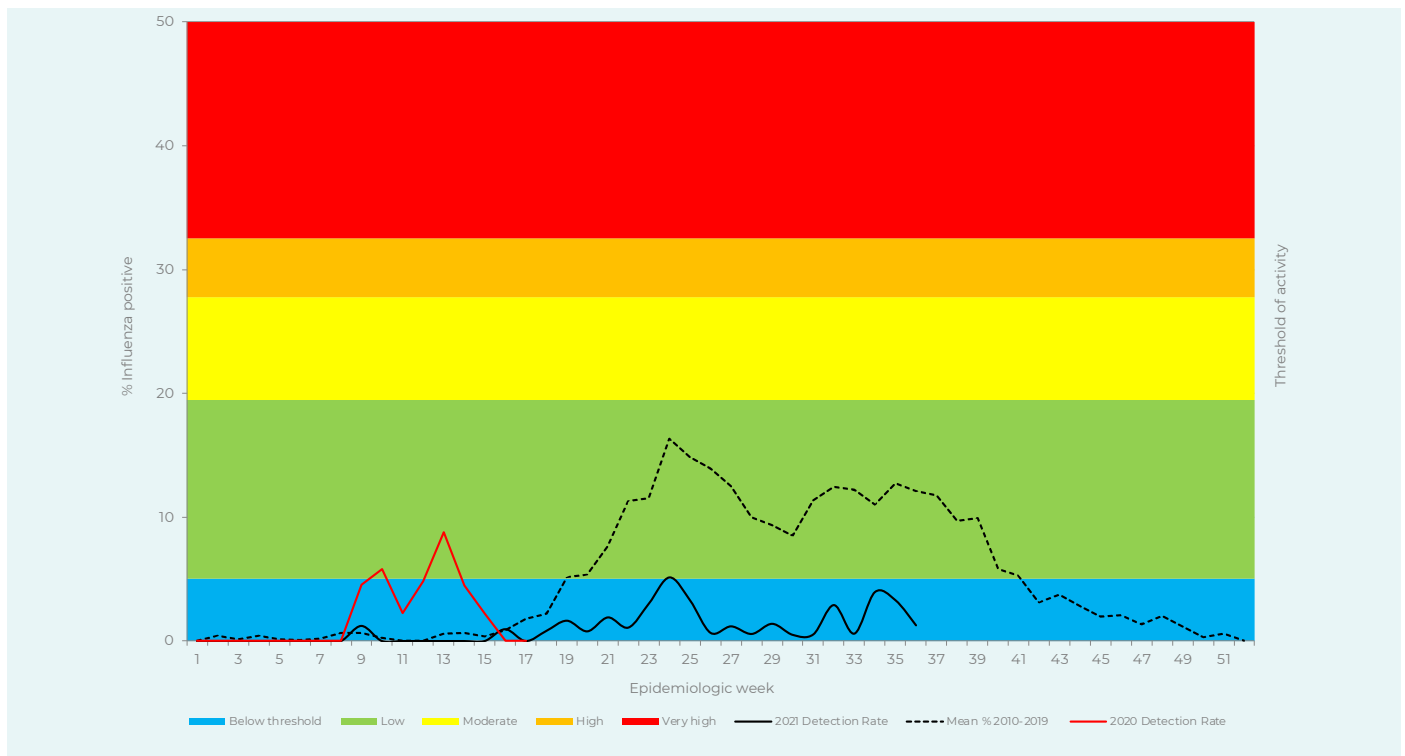


**SEASONAL DISEASES**

## Influenza, 2021

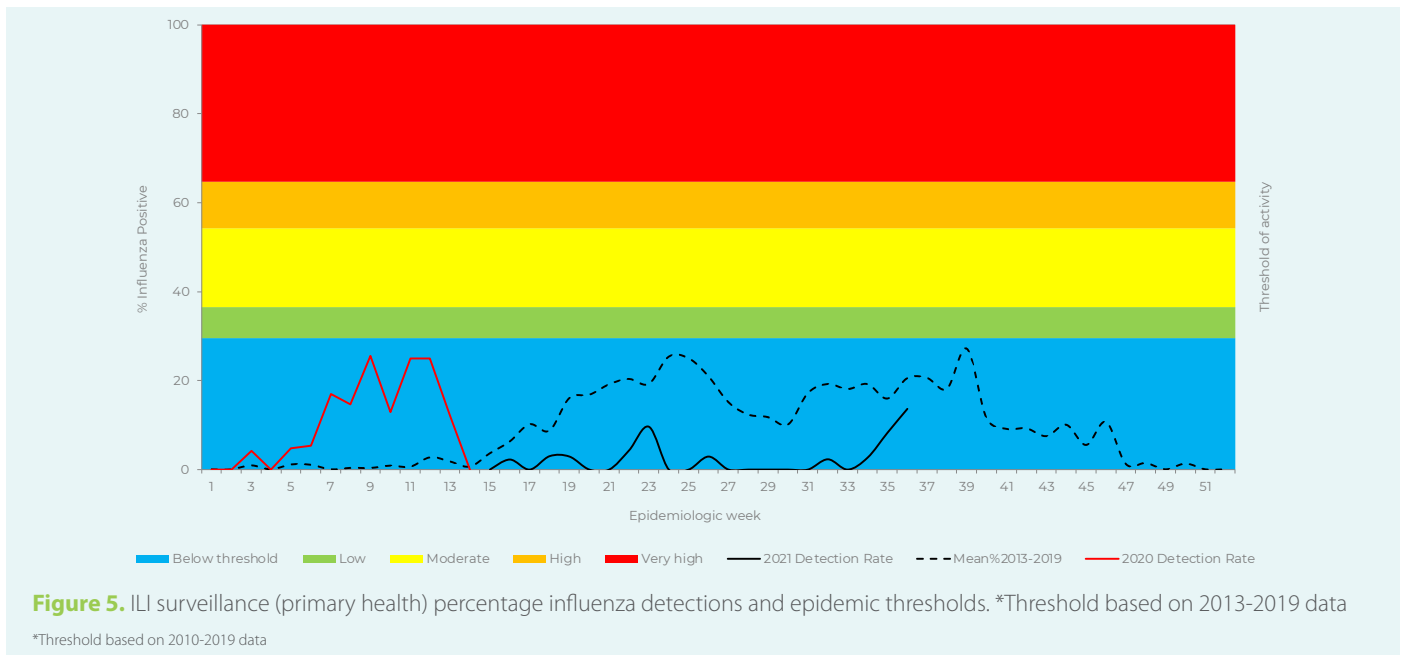
A total of 94 influenza positive cases has been detected by the syndromic sentinel surveillance programmes conducted by the NICD as of week 36 of 2021 (week ending 12 September 2021). Following the first case detected in March 2021, sporadic cases of influenza have been reported, with highest number of influenza positive cases reported in 2021 to date (12/94, 13%) in week 23 (week ending 13 June 2021). Influenza B Victoria has been the most detected subtype (79/94, 84.04%), followed by Influenza A (H3N2) (6/94, 6.38%), Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 (2/94, 2.13%) and 7.45% (7/94) were influenza B subtype inconclusive. The influenza transmission rate for 2021 has remained below the 2010 – 2019 and 2013 - 2019 mean detection rate and is below seasonal threshold [using the Moving Epidemic Method (MEM), a sequential analysis using

the R Language, to calculate the duration, start and end of the annual epidemic] (Figure 4 and 5). In comparison to 2020, when influenza circulation was mostly observed in the beginning of the year in Western Cape Province, influenza detections in 2021 have mostly been observed in the second half of the year. This could be due to a reduced adherence to non-pharmaceutical interventions implemented as part of the COVID-19 pandemic response strategy. With changes in influenza transmission noted since the start of the pandemic, influenza should be considered as one of the differential diagnoses based on clinical suspicion irrespective of the time of the year. The NICD influenza guidelines, 2021, contain recommendations on influenza diagnosis, target groups, dosages, and contraindications for the 2021 influenza vaccine, as well as influenza antiviral treatment.



**Figure 4.** SRI surveillance percentage influenza 2020 & 2021 detections and epidemic thresholds\*

**SEASONAL DISEASES**



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

## Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) 2021

In 2021 to date, RSV has been circulating since the first week of the year. Of the 5 792 cases who were tested for RSV at the sentinel sites, 470 (8%) tested positive, 5% (73/1 314) in ILI and 8% (397/4 478) in SRI. The majority of RSV positive cases were subgroup A (243/470, 52%), followed by subgroup B (212/470, 45%), nine (2%) were inconclusive. The highest detection rate in 2021 to date was reported in week 11, 22% (26/116) for SRI and 28% (7/25) for ILI (Figure 6 and 7). The detection rate has been

decreasing in the past few weeks to rates below 10% since week 26 (Figure 6 and 7). Since week 7 of 2021, the detection rate for hospitalised cases in 2021 has been below the mean detection rate reported for 2010 – 2019 mean percentage (Figure 6). However, the detection rate for outpatients briefly surpassed the 2013 – 2019 mean percentage between weeks 23 and 25 (Figure 7).

