

# Influenza 2017-2018

Annual Report



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Taney County Health Department



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## 2017-2018 Annual Report for Taney County, Missouri

### Influenza Reporting

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), under reporting rule [19 CSR 2020.020](#), designated influenza as a condition that must be reported to the local health agency or DHSS. Data for this report was collected from multiple sources, including medical providers, laboratories, and hospitals. Timely reporting and rapid investigations are critical for identifying possible outbreaks, assuring appropriate preventive treatment and education, and guiding the planning and evaluation of disease prevention and control programs.

### 2017 Snapshot

Seasonal influenza (flu) viruses can be detected year-round in the United States, but are most common during the fall and winter. Influenza activity often begins to increase in October and can last as late as May. Peak flu activity generally occurs between December and February. During the 2017-2018 Influenza Season (Week 40 of 2017 through Week 20 of 2018), the Taney County Health Department (TCHD) received 841 case reports of lab-confirmed influenza. The 841 lab-confirmed flu cases in the 2017-2018 Influenza season were 2.5 times more cases than were reported in Taney County for the 2016-2017 season and were also more cases than the previous three Influenza seasons combined.

The charts on pages 2-4 highlight additional information on recent flu seasons in Taney County.

### Disease Burden to the Community

The number of reported cases of lab-confirmed influenza under represents the true number of cases occurring in Taney County. Potential cases with mild symptoms often go unreported as ill individuals often recover without treatment or may be treated by a medical provider without diagnostic testing. Cases with life threatening or other severe symptoms are more likely to result in hospitalization and diagnosis via laboratory testing. Increased regional and national media attention during severe flu seasons can also impact reporting by driving more ill individuals to seek treatment and more providers to be on the lookout for cases. Finally, it is important to note that ill individuals may be diagnosed clinically by their medical providers with a given illness but without laboratory testing would be counted as cases of Influenza-like illness (ILI).

## What is Influenza?

Seasonal Influenza (also known as the flu) is a viral illness that affects the respiratory tract. Symptoms typically consist of fever, dry cough, headache, muscle aches, weakness, runny nose and sore throat. Most symptoms (including fever) typically resolve in 5-7 days, though the associated cough may last longer. Symptoms usually develop around 2 days after exposure (with a range of 1-4 days possible) and ill individuals are usually the most infectious to others for the first 3-5 days of illness. Anti-viral medications are available with a prescription but are generally not recommended for low-risk individuals. The primary benefits of anti-viral medications include a shortening of the illness duration of about a day and a reduced risk of serious complications such as pneumonia. Complications of seasonal influenza may be severe, especially for high-risk groups such as the immunocompromised, elderly adults or children under 2 years of age.

Bridges, C.B., Mounst, A., Besselaar, T., Fitzner, J., Vandemaele, K., Shindo, N., & Tam, J.S. (2015). Influenza. In D. L. Heymann, MD (Ed.), *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual* (20<sup>th</sup> ed., pp.306-322). Washington, DC: APHA Press.

## Prevention

TCHD strongly endorses the annual Influenza vaccine as the best way for local residents to protect themselves from the harmful effects of the flu. Recommended precautions also include staying away from people who are sick, covering coughs and sneezes and frequent handwashing.

## Chart 1:

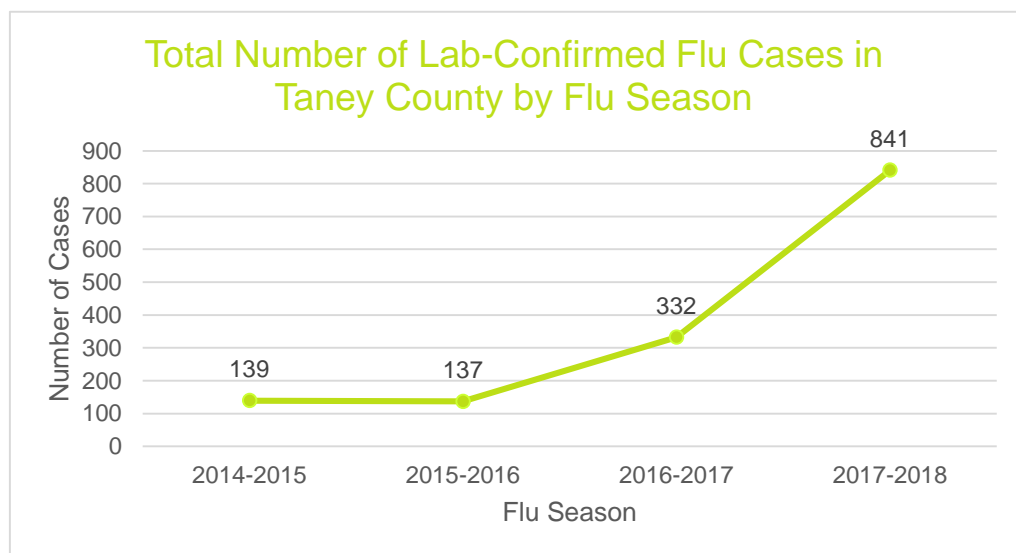


Chart 2:

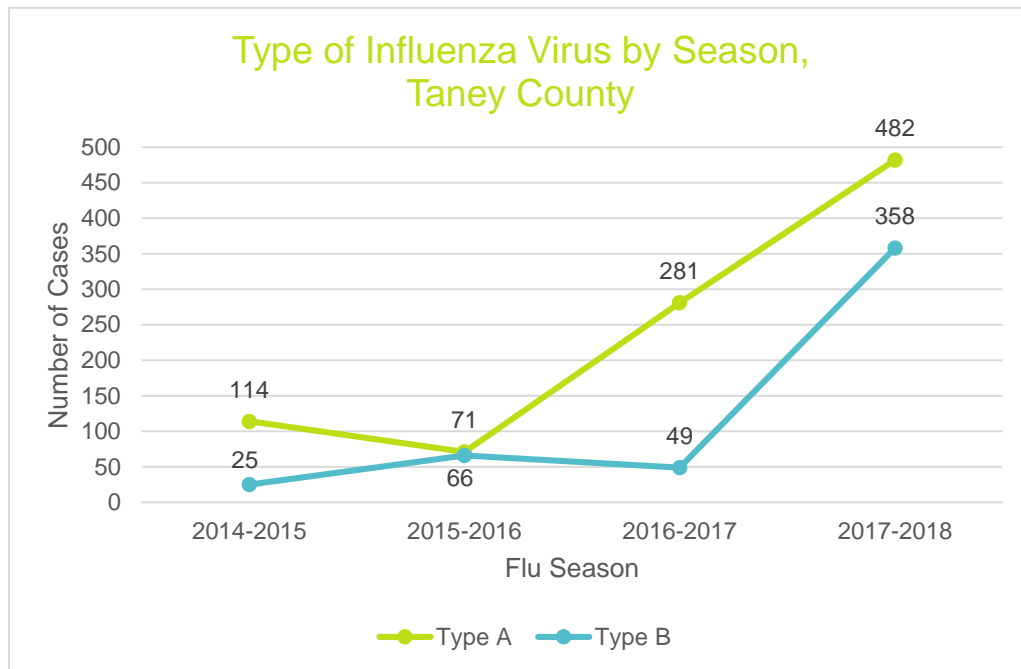


Chart 3:

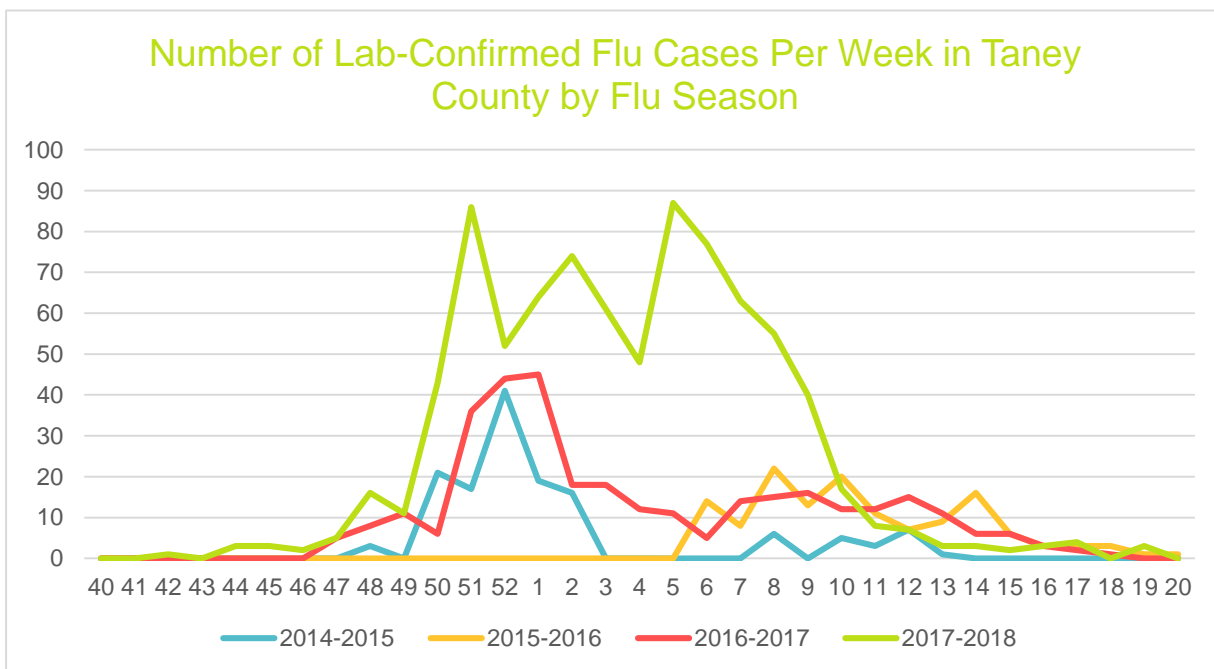
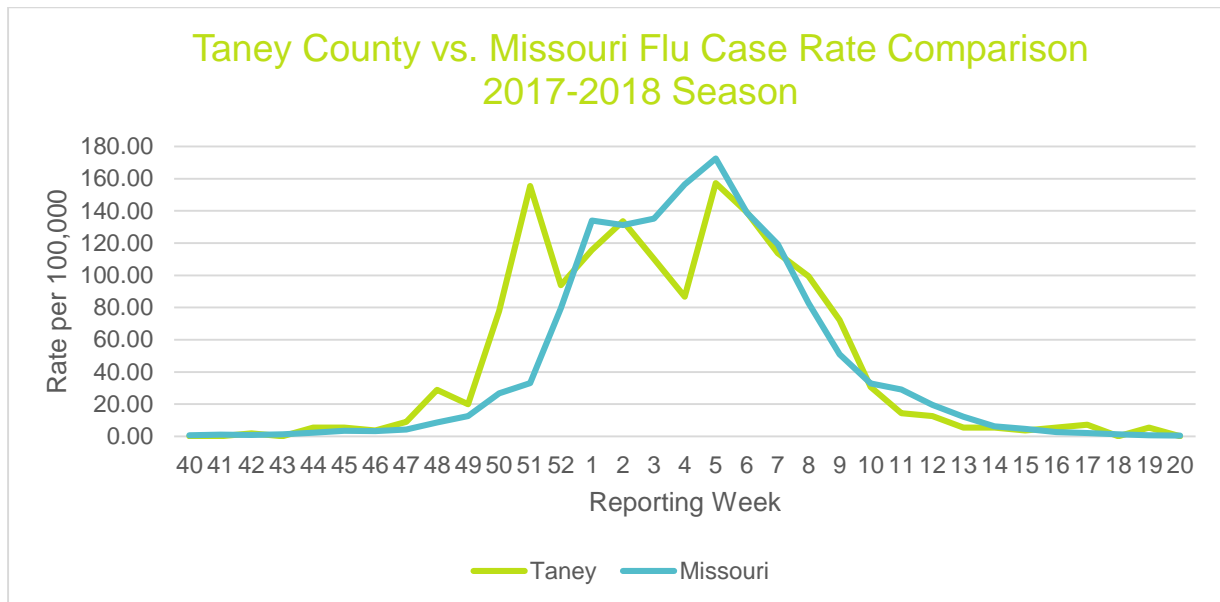


Chart 4:



## Outbreaks

Outbreaks are the occurrence of more cases of disease than expected in a given area or among a specific group of people during a particular period of time. The Taney County Health Department employs one full-time Epidemiologist and one full-time Communicable Disease Nurse who routinely handle all communicable disease investigations including outbreak investigations. Additional resources and staff (such as Environmental Specialists and additional clinical staff) may be called upon for assistance as needed. When an outbreak investigation is initiated, TCHD staff work closely with community partners to identify potential cases and stop the spread of illness.

TCHD investigated one confirmed Influenza outbreak in Taney County during the 2017-2018 Influenza Season. Table 1 contains a brief summary of the outbreak investigated.

Table 1:

Summary of Influenza Outbreaks Investigated in Taney County 2017-2018 Influenza Season			
Onset	Setting	Agent	Summary
November	Long-Term Care	Influenza A	10 residents developed respiratory illness. Testing confirmed the presence of Influenza A in all 4 of the residents tested.

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