

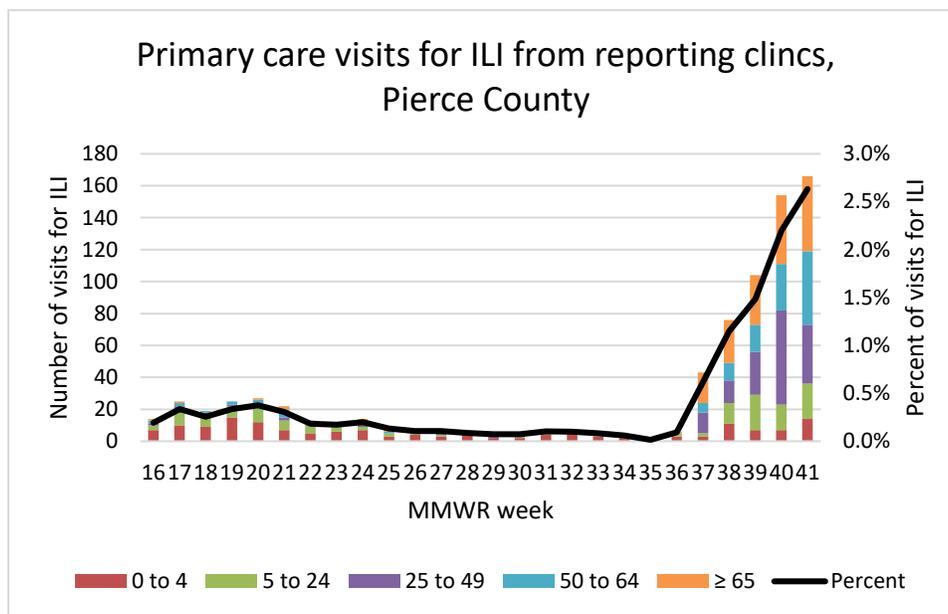
Oct. 23, 2018 • Information for Pierce County Healthcare Providers

Matthew Rolloson, MPH&TM, RN • mrolloson@tpchd.org • (253) 798-6052

Communicable Disease Control  
3629 S. D St. • Tacoma, WA 98418  
(253) 798-6410 • (253) 798-7666 (fax)

## Influenza Update—Week 42

Although reporting primary care clinics are seeing an increase in visits for influenza-like illness (ILI), overall influenza activity is low in Pierce County, Washington, and the United States. During weeks 40 and 41, 3% of tested specimens were positive for influenza.



### Influenza hospitalizations

Since mid-September, we have received five reports of Pierce County residents hospitalized with influenza; two with influenza A and three with influenza B. Hospitalized patients' ages ranged from late-teens to late 60s. All hospitalized patients had at least one pre-existing condition that increased their risk of influenza complications and death. Two patients required intensive care unit (ICU) admission. One was subsequently discharged to home. The other died this week.

The Pierce County resident who died was in his 40s and had multiple comorbidities. He tested positive for influenza B on admission and spent more than a week in ICU before he died.

Influenza B typically causes less severe illness than influenza A and influenza B infections are more common late in the season. Nevertheless, influenza B is responsible for hospitalizations in Pierce County and the first influenza-associated death in Washington. Because these patients were diagnosed with rapid tests, we do not know the subtype of the viruses.

This death and these hospitalizations illustrate the importance of immunizing against influenza early in the season, especially for people with premorbid conditions increasing their risk of influenza complications and death.