Public Health Ontario | Santé publique Ontario

USER GUIDE

Ontario Respiratory Virus Tool

Updated: November 2026

Introduction

The Ontario Respiratory Virus Tool is an interactive tool that provides weekly epidemiological information on respiratory virus activity in Ontario, including COVID-19, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and other respiratory viruses. The tool enables users to explore and download up-to-date data on case trends, outcomes, laboratory testing, outbreaks and projections. Through interactive visualizations, users can customize displays and data, examine trends over time and generate insights to support timely evidence informed decision making. This user guide describes the contents of this interactive report, how it is organized, and the functionalities for visualizing the content. Data for COVID-19 starts from January 2020, while for other viruses, additional historical data is available. The ORVT will always contain data for ten respiratory seasons: nine years of historical data, plus data for the current respiratory season, where available.

The tool is organized into five tabs based on the content type included:

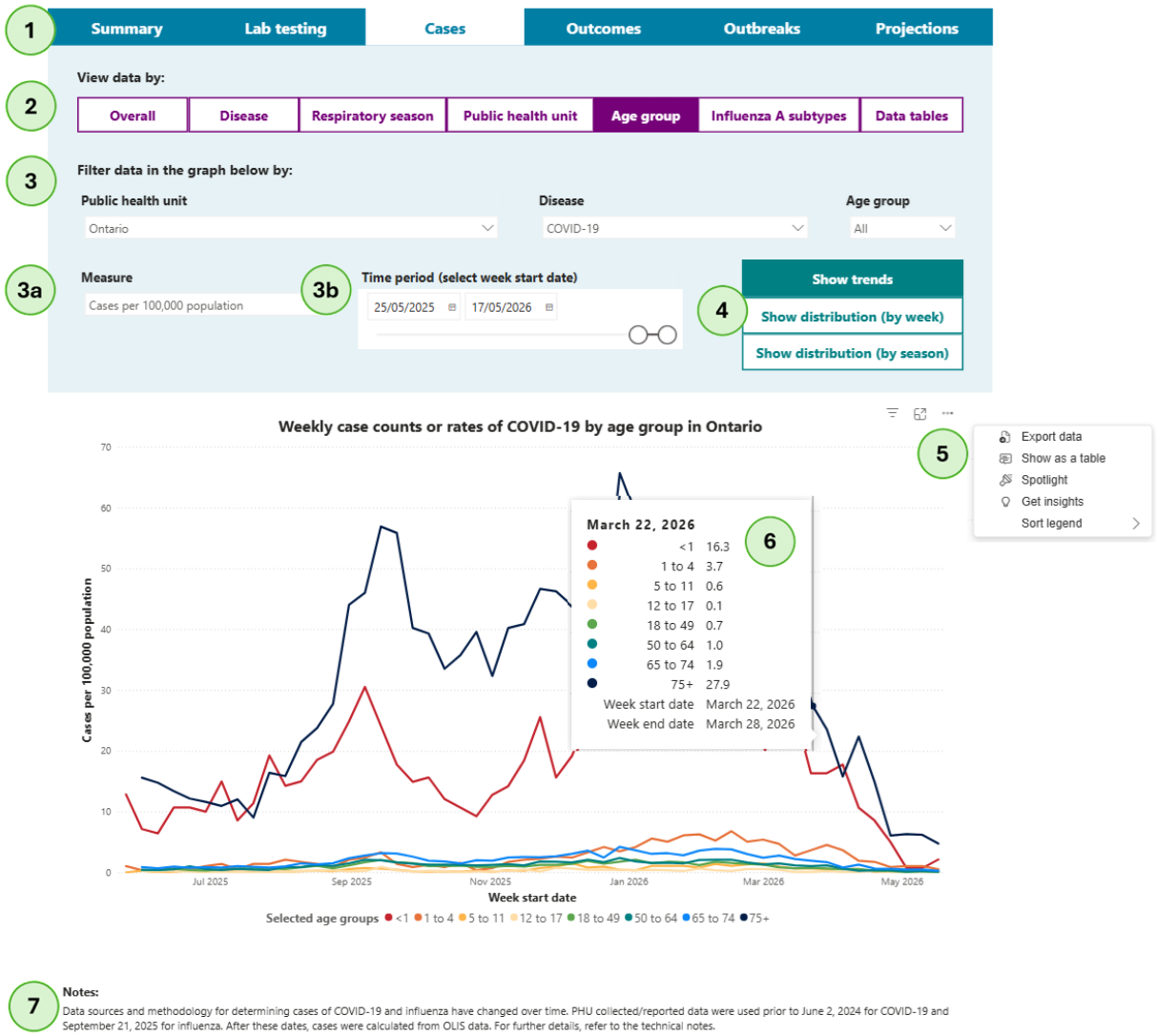
- **Summary tab:** contains high level summary information on recent activity and positivity levels for COVID-19, influenza, RSV, and other respiratory viruses, including key statistics for the current surveillance week and current respiratory season, and past year trends for several indicators
- **Lab testing tab:** contains information on laboratory test results for COVID-19, influenza, RSV, and other respiratory viruses
- **Cases tab:** contains information on cases of COVID-19, influenza, and RSV
- **Outcomes tab:** contains information on COVID-19, influenza, and RSV hospital admissions, bed occupancy and COVID-19 deaths
- **Outbreaks tab:** contains information on outbreaks of COVID-19, influenza, RSV, and other respiratory viruses
- **Projections tab:** contains information on projected activity and risk of hospitalization from COVID-19, influenza, and RSV.

Each tab contains different selection criteria for users to view the data by several stratifiers, enabling them to make comparisons. Some of the options available include selecting by virus, respiratory season, public health unit, age group, and setting. Specific details on what is contained in all the tabs and sections is outlined throughout this document.

Using the Ontario Respiratory Virus Tool

Overview

Generally, the functionality is similar across the different tabs in the tool. The available selection areas are numbered and summarized below.



1. **Navigation bar:** This top navigation bar is used to move between the different tabs (Summary, Lab testing, Cases, Outcomes, Outbreaks, Projections). The tab being viewed is indicated in white, while the others remain blue.
2. **Stratifiers (View data by):** The buttons in the ‘View data by’ navigation bar are used to change the stratifier used in the graph. Selecting a stratifier organizes the larger data sets and allows users to view the data by subsets with similar characteristics (e.g., disease, public health unit, age group). The stratifiers for this tool vary depending on the tab users have selected. The current selection is indicated in purple, while the others remain white.

3. **Filters:** Filters are used to break down the data within each section by selecting the drop down arrow. The filter will either allow for a single selection or multi-selection depending on the stratifier selected. The Age group filters are multi-select throughout all of the tabs. Further details on filters in specific tabs are available in the section below.
    - The 'Measure' filter appears within all of tabs and stratification views except when 'Overall' is selected on the 'View data by' navigation bar. Selecting 'Overall' changes the measure being used to plot the data on the graph.
    - The 'Time period' filter is used to adjust the time period used to plot the data on the x-axis of the graph by either selecting a start and end date in the top boxes or by dragging the slider below the date selection. The weekly data in the graph will always start on the Sunday of that week. If a different day of the week is selected then the graph will default to the following Sunday. If 'Respiratory season' is selected in the 'View data by' navigation bar, the 'Time period' filter will be replaced by one where only the entire respiratory season can be selected.
4. **Changing views:** In some tabs there are multiple views available for the stratifier. You can view the data in the graph by selecting different views (trends, distribution, maps) for that specific stratifier (e.g., by age group or by setting). These buttons will appear on the right side of the time selector when this functionality is available.
5. **Download data from the graph:** When hovering over a graph, a context menu (denoted by three dots) will appear at the top right. Once selected, users can choose to export the data in the graph or view the data in the graph as a table. To capture an image of the graph, users can use the Snipping tool built into Microsoft Windows (Windows logo key + Shift + S) or macOS (Command + Shift + 5).
6. **Tooltips:** When hovering over any data point on a graph, a tooltip will appear with related information about that data point.
7. **Notes:** Beneath the visualization in each tab are brief notes describing important considerations for data interpretation. Further details can be found in the technical notes.

Summary Tab

This tab contains high level summary information on recent activity and positivity levels for COVID-19, influenza, RSV, and other respiratory viruses in the province. The tab contains five sections:

Key Findings

This section provides a weekly assessment of COVID-19, influenza, and RSV indicators, along detailed key findings for the week. At the top of the page are three pictograms showing COVID-19, influenza, and RSV percent positivity (percent of persons tested who tested positive for the virus) and the change in activity from the previous week based on a combination of indicators including percent positivity and outbreaks. Below that are a number of bullets summarizing the key findings for the week. Lastly, at the bottom of the page are buttons which can be used to download CSV files containing data for the previous and current respiratory seasons. Users can also connect directly to these datasets from the following links:

- Cases
- Lab testing/percent positivity
- Outcomes
- Outbreaks
- Historical activity assessment
- PHU positivity categorization

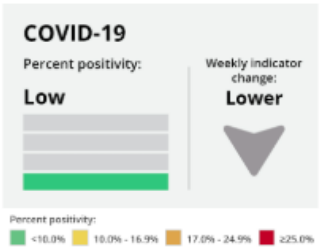
Summary | Lab testing | Cases | Outcomes | Outbreaks | Projections

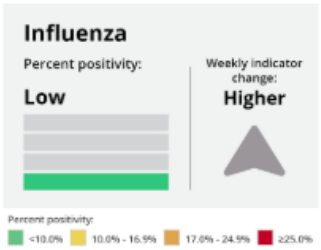
Key findings | Current surveillance week | Current respiratory season | Past year trends

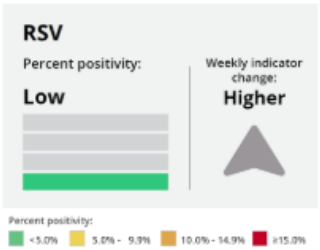
October 18, 2026 to October 24, 2026 (surveillance week 42, 2026-27 season, Ontario)

Weekly assessment

These images provide a high-level assessment of respiratory virus activity in Ontario. Provincial percent positivity can be used to provide an estimate of the intensity of circulating viruses in the province. Percent positivity for the most recent week of data available is used to assign COVID-19, influenza, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) to either a low, moderate, high or very high category. **Weekly indicator change was determined by considering a combination of indicators including changes in percent positivity and outbreaks.** See technical notes for more details.







Key findings

COVID-19

- Percent positivity was low (3.1%) and is projected to remain stable through November 7. Overall activity was down from last week.
  - Highest percent positivity: 75+ (4.3%) and <1 years (3.7%).

Influenza

- Percent positivity was low (4.4%) and is projected to increase through November 7. Overall activity was up from last week.
- Most activity is due to influenza A.
  - Highest percent positivity: 5–11 (14.6%) and 1–4 years (9.8%).
  - H1N1 was the most common subtype this week (see Cases tab).
    - Of the 126 influenza A specimens sequenced to date, 125 were identified as H1N1 subclade D.3.1.1 and one was H3N2 subclade K.
- No antiviral resistant influenza isolates have been identified this season to date by the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML).

Respiratory Syncytial Virus

- Percent positivity was low (0.3%) and is projected to remain stable through November 7. Overall activity was up from last week.
  - Highest percent positivity: <1 years (3.1%) and 1-4 (2.2%).

Other respiratory viruses

- Entero/rhinovirus was the most common other respiratory virus this week, with percent positivity at 16.2% this surveillance week

Vaccination information

- Vaccination is the best way to provide protection against the most severe outcomes of COVID-19, influenza and RSV, including hospitalization and death. For eligibility and availability see: Protection from respiratory illnesses | ontario.ca

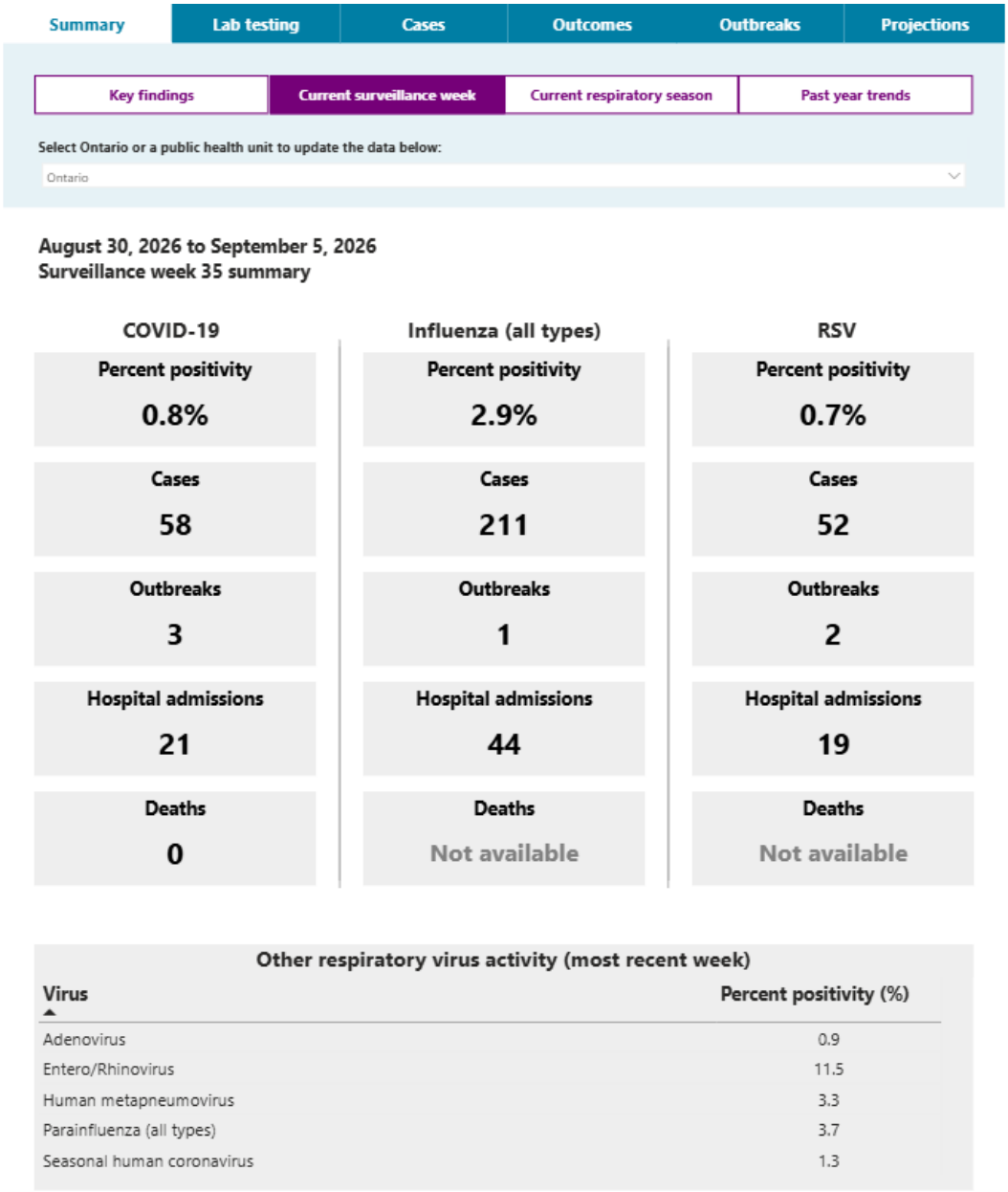
Download data for the previous and current respiratory season

Cases | Outcomes | Lab testing / percent positivity

Historical activity assessment | PHU positivity categorization | Outbreaks

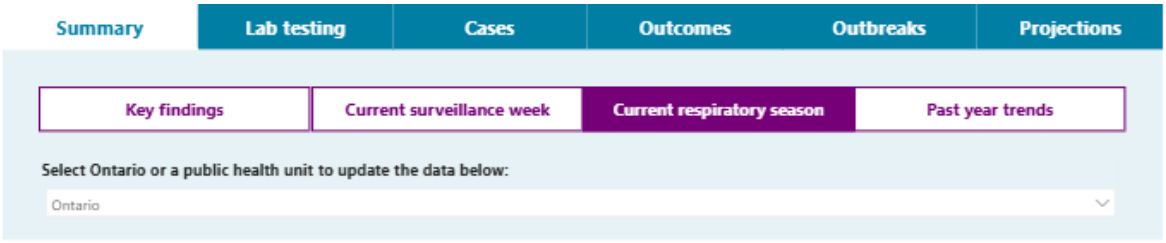
Current Surveillance Week

This section shows key indicators for COVID-19, influenza, and RSV over the past week, along with percent positivity for other respiratory viruses for both the province as well as by public health unit.



Current Respiratory Season

This section shows key indicators for COVID-19, influenza, and RSV over the current respiratory season, along with percent positivity for other respiratory viruses for both the province as well as by public health unit.



August 30, 2026 to September 5, 2026
2026-27 respiratory season totals

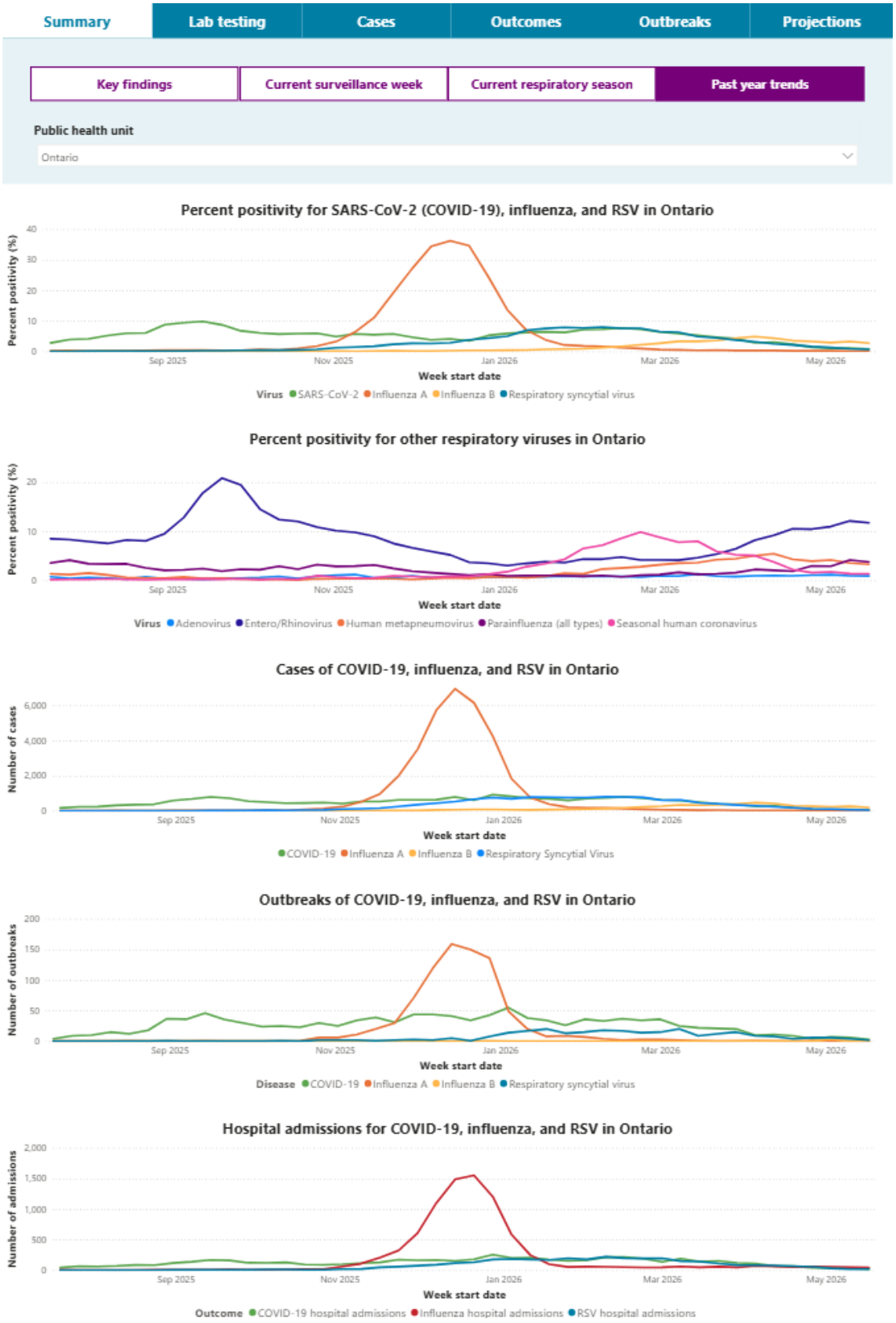
COVID-19	Influenza (all types)	RSV
Percent positivity (highest reported in this respiratory season)	**Percent positivity** (highest reported in this respiratory season)	**Percent positivity** (highest reported in this respiratory season)
9.7%	36.0%	7.9%
Cases	**Cases**	**Cases**
20,486	39,129	13,037
Outbreaks	**Outbreaks**	**Outbreaks**
1,107	829	268
Hospital admissions	**Hospital admissions**	**Hospital admissions**
5,316	8,620	6,776
Deaths	**Deaths**	**Deaths**
181	Not available	Not available

Other respiratory virus activity (highest reported in this respiratory season)

Virus	Percent positivity (%)
Seasonal human coronavirus	9.8
Parainfluenza (all types)	4.1
Human metapneumovirus	5.6
Entero/Rhinovirus	20.6
Adenovirus	1.3

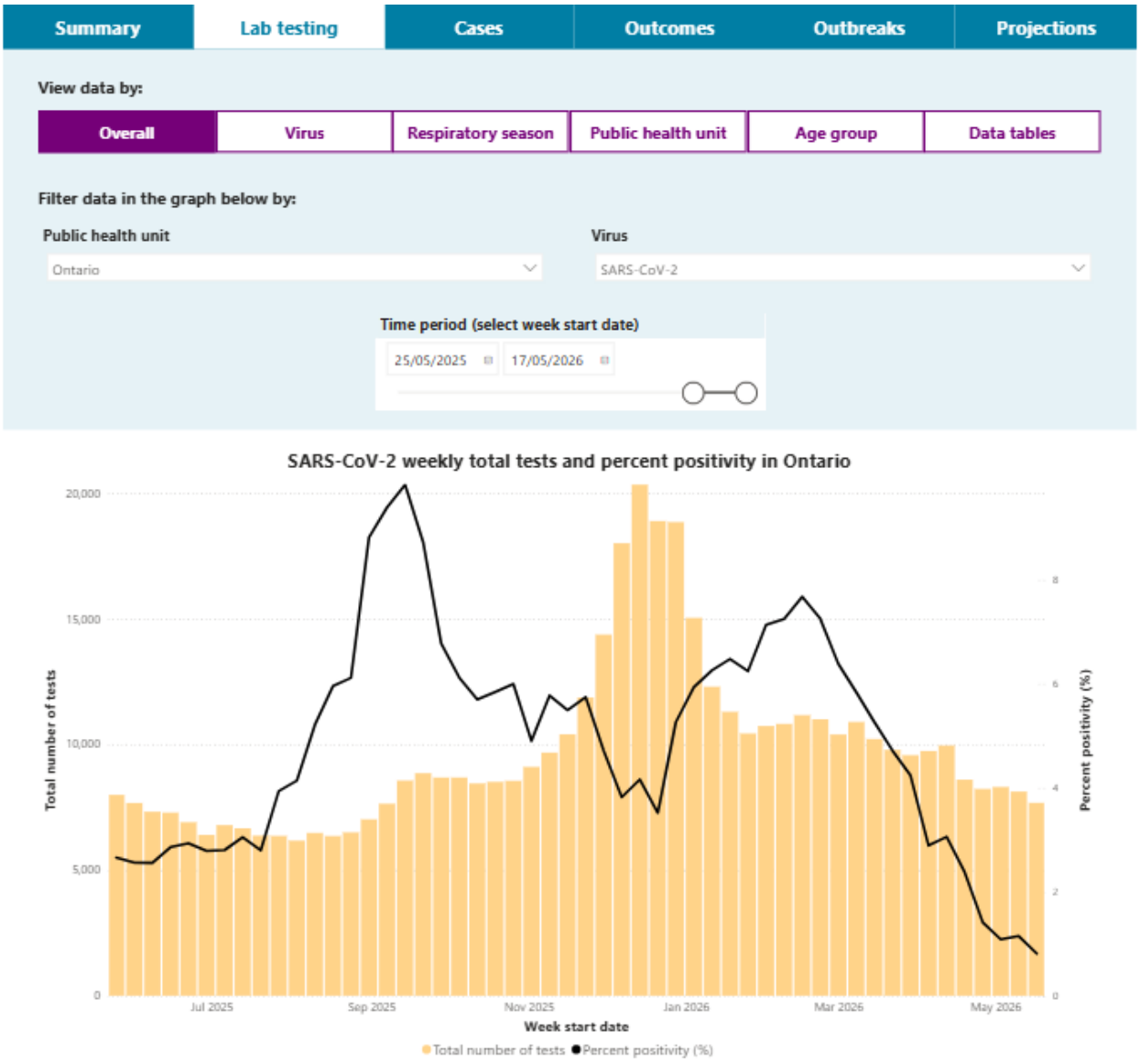
Past Year Trends

This section shows provincial trends of key indicators over the past 52 weeks for COVID-19, influenza, RSV, and other respiratory viruses at the provincial or public health unit level.



Lab Testing Tab

This tab contains information on laboratory test results for respiratory viruses in the province, with the ability to filter and view data by key stratifiers.



This tab contains six sections:

Overall

This section contains a bar and line graph displaying total number of tests and percent positivity by week. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), virus (SARS-CoV-2, influenza by subtype, adenovirus, entero/rhinovirus, human metapneumovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, seasonal coronavirus), and time period.

Virus

This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (number of total tests, number of positive tests, or percent positivity), allowing users to compare trends for the selected viruses. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), virus (SARS-CoV-2, influenza by subtype, adenovirus, entero/rhinovirus, human metapneumovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, seasonal coronavirus), and time period. Filtering by more than one virus will add lines to the graph for the selected viruses.

Respiratory Season

This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (number of total tests, number of positive tests, or percent positivity) over different respiratory seasons, allowing users to compare seasonal differences in the data. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), virus (SARS-CoV-2, influenza by subtype, adenovirus, entero/rhinovirus, human metapneumovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, seasonal coronavirus), and time period. Filtering by more than one respiratory season will add lines to the graph for the selected respiratory seasons. This section also has a button which will switch the view to display a bar graph showing the distribution by respiratory season for the selected time period.

Public Health Unit

This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (number of total tests, number of positive tests, or percent positivity), allowing users to compare trends by public health unit. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), virus (SARS-CoV-2, influenza by subtype, adenovirus, entero/rhinovirus, human metapneumovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, seasonal coronavirus), and time period. Filtering by more than one public health unit will add lines to the graph for the selected public health units (by default, only the provincial line is selected). This section also has buttons which will switch the view to display either a bar graph showing the distribution by public health unit for the selected time period, or a map of the province showing COVID-19, influenza, and RSV positivity levels.

Age Group

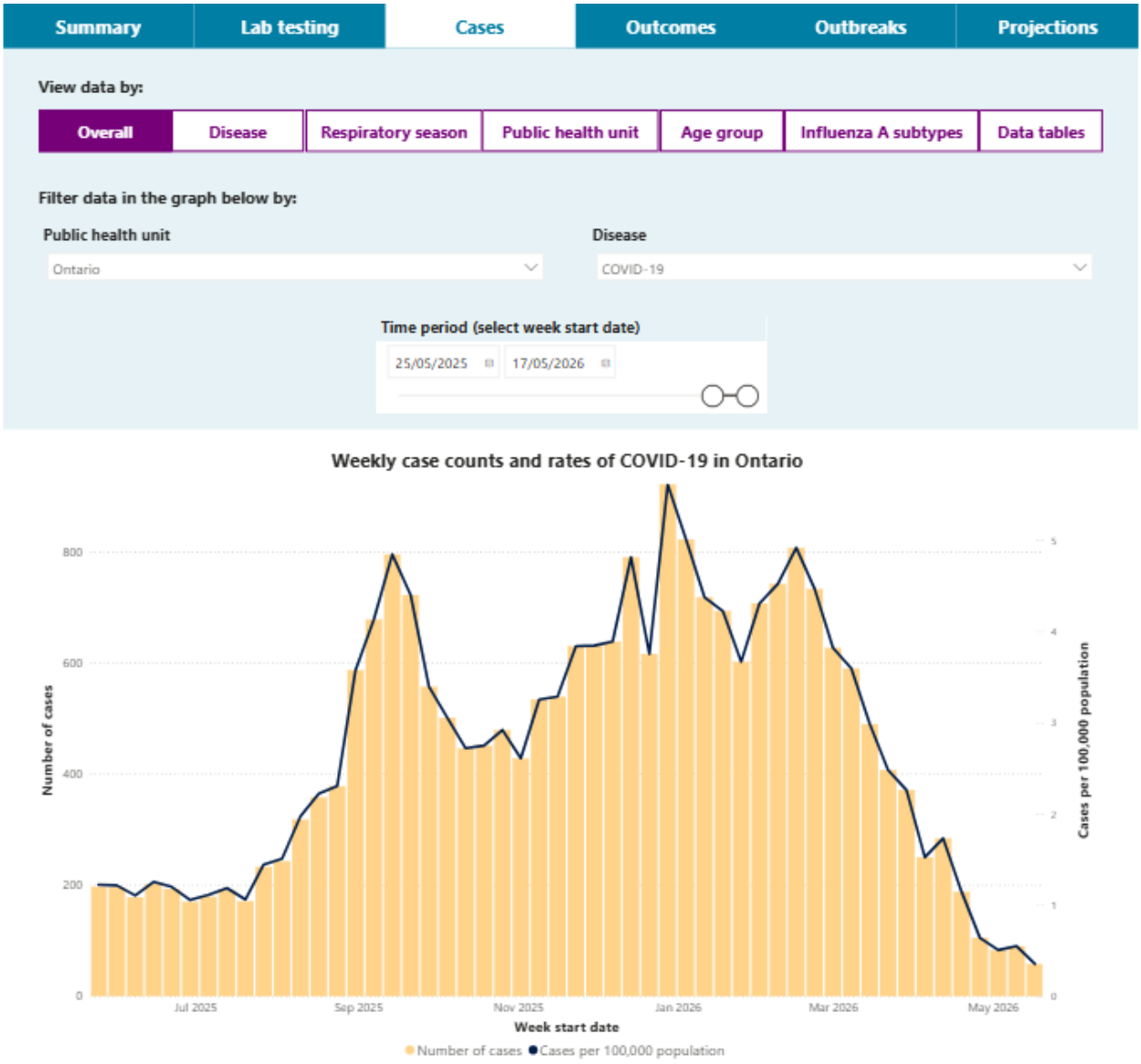
This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (number of total tests, number of positive tests, or percent positivity), allowing users to compare trends by age group. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), virus (SARS-CoV-2, influenza by subtype, adenovirus, entero/rhinovirus, human metapneumovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, seasonal coronavirus), age group, and time period. Filtering by more than one age group will add lines to the graph for the selected age groups. This section also has a button which will switch the view to display a bar graph showing the distribution by age group for the selected time period.

Data Tables

This section allows the user to build a table with lab testing data which can be exported. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), virus (SARS-CoV-2, influenza by subtype, adenovirus, entero/rhinovirus, human metapneumovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, seasonal coronavirus), and time period. This section has a filter which allows the user to add surveillance week and age group to the table.

Cases Tab

This tab contains information on cases of COVID-19, influenza, and RSV in the province, and provides users with the ability to view data by key stratifiers with options to further filter the data.



This tab contains seven sections:

Overall

This section contains a bar and line graph displaying cases and rates by week. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), disease (COVID-19, influenza by subtype (all types, influenza A, influenza A H1, influenza A H3, influenza B), and RSV), and time period.

Disease

This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (cases or rates), allowing users to compare trends by disease. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), disease (COVID-19, influenza by subtype (all types, influenza A, influenza A H1, influenza A H3, influenza B), and RSV), and time period. Selecting more than one disease in that filter will add the corresponding information to the graph.

Respiratory Season

This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (cases or rates) over different annual respiratory seasons, allowing users to compare seasonal differences in the data. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), disease (COVID-19, influenza by subtype (all types, influenza A, influenza A H1, influenza A H3, influenza B), and RSV), and respiratory season. Filtering by more than one respiratory season will add those lines to the graph. This section also has a button which will switch the view to display the data for respiratory season totals.

Public Health Unit

This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (cases or rates), allowing users to compare trends by public health unit. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), disease (COVID-19, influenza by subtype (all types, influenza A, influenza A H1, influenza A H3, influenza B), and RSV), and time period. Filtering by more than one public health unit will add those PHUs to the graph (by default, only the provincial line is selected). This section also has buttons which will switch the view to display either a bar graph showing the distribution by public health unit for the selected time period, or a map of the province showing indicators for cases of COVID-19, influenza, and RSV.

Age Group

This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (cases or rates), allowing users to compare trends by age group. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), disease (COVID-19, influenza by subtype (all types, influenza A, influenza A H1, influenza A H3, influenza B), and RSV), age group, and time period. Filtering by more than one age group will add those age groups to the graph. This section also has buttons which will switch the view to displaying a bar graph showing the distribution by age group by week or by respiratory season.

Influenza A Subtypes

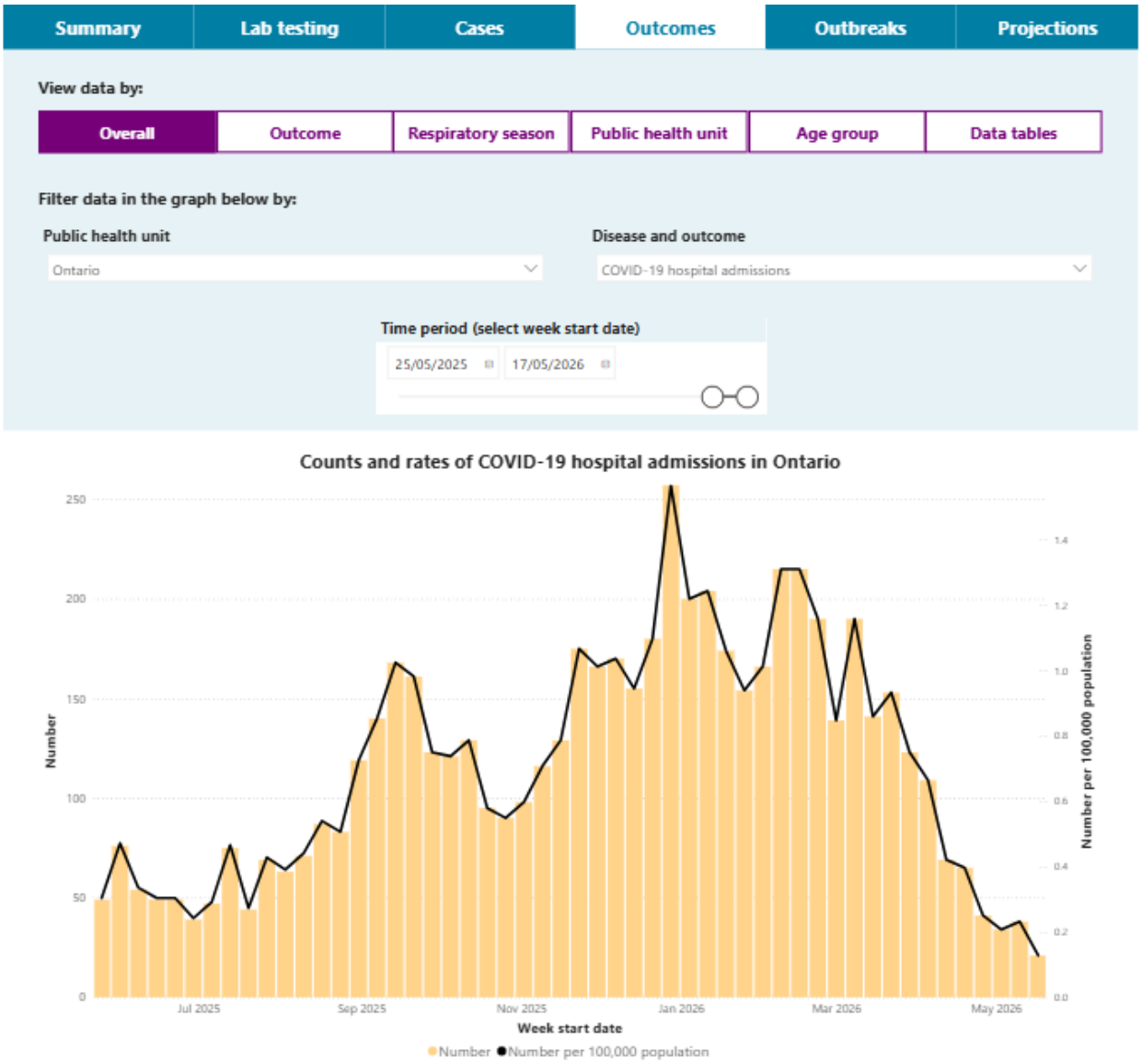
This section contains a bar chart showing circulating influenza A subtypes in the most recent week and the current respiratory season to-date. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province).

Data Tables

This section allows the user to build a table with case data which can be exported. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), disease (COVID-19, influenza by subtype (all types, influenza A, influenza A H1, influenza A H3, influenza B), and RSV), and time period. This section has a filter which allows the user to add surveillance week and age group to the table.

Outcomes Tab

This tab contains information on outcomes for COVID-19, influenza, and RSV in the province, and provides users with the ability to view data by key stratifiers with options to further filter the data.



This tab contains six sections:

Overall

This section contains a bar and line graph displaying the outcomes and rates by week. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), outcome (hospital admissions, bed occupancy and deaths (COVID-19 only)), and time period.

Outcome

This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (cases or rates), allowing users to compare trends by outcome. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), outcome (hospital admissions, bed occupancy and deaths (COVID-19 only)), and time period. Selecting more than one outcome in that filter will add the corresponding information to the graph.

Respiratory Season

This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (cases or rates) over different annual respiratory seasons, allowing users to compare seasonal differences in the data. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), outcome (hospital admissions, bed occupancy and deaths (COVID-19 only)), and respiratory season. Filtering by more than one respiratory season will add those lines to the graph. This section also has a button which will switch the view to display the data for respiratory season totals (totals are available for COVID-19 hospital admissions and deaths only).

Public Health Unit

This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (cases or rates), allowing users to compare trends by public health unit. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), outcome (hospital admissions, bed occupancy and deaths (COVID-19 only)), and time period. Filtering by more than one public health unit will add those public health units to the graph (by default, only the provincial line is selected). This section also has buttons which will switch the view to display either a bar graph showing the distribution by public health unit for the selected time period, or a map of the province showing outcomes for COVID-19, influenza, and RSV.

Age Group

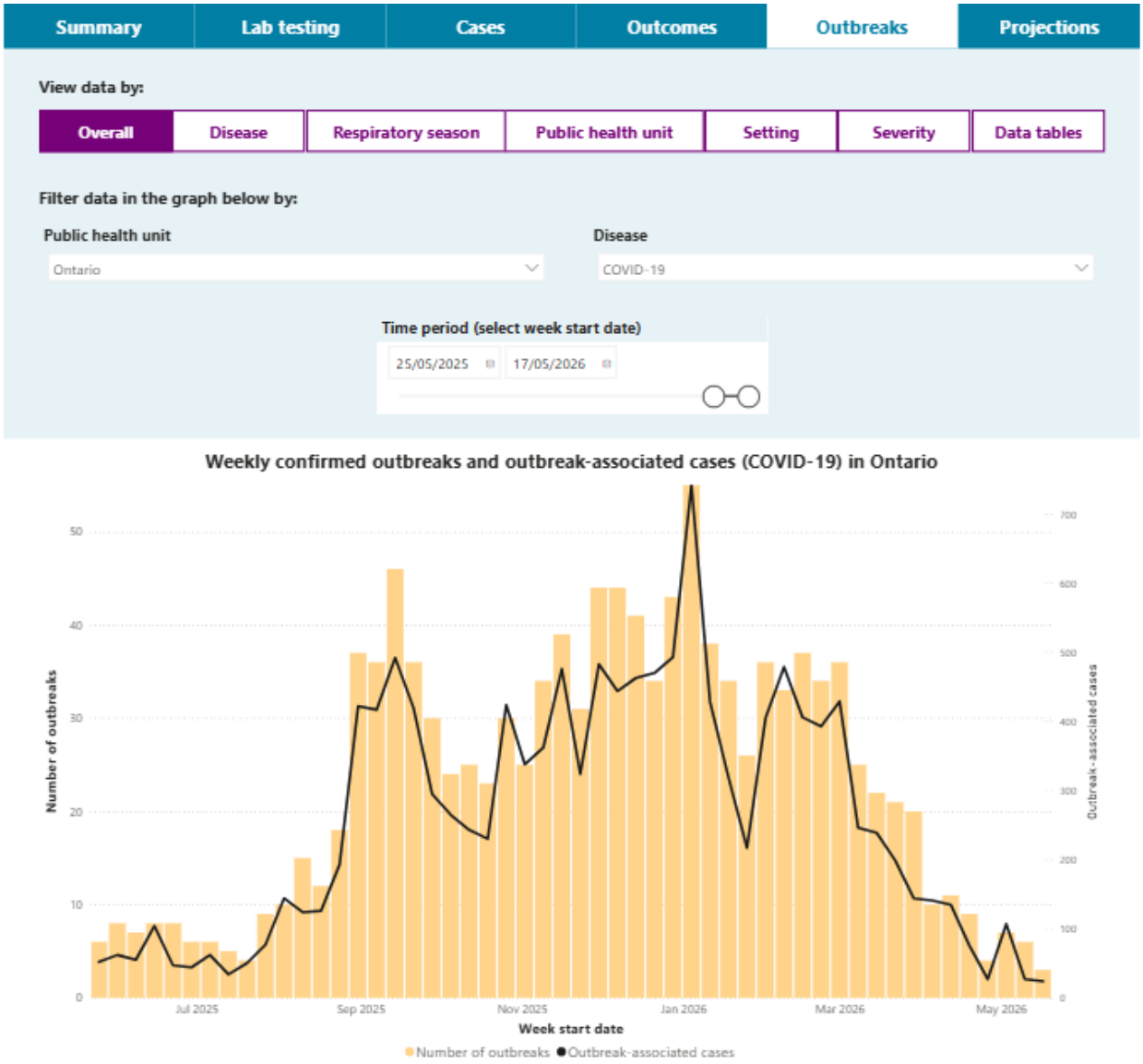
This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (cases or rates) for hospital bed occupancy or a graph showing distribution by age group for COVID-19 hospital admissions and deaths. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), age group, and time period.

Data Tables

This section allows the user to build a table with outcome data which can be exported. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), outcome (hospital admissions, bed occupancy, and deaths (COVID-19 only)), and time period.

Outbreaks Tab

This tab contains information on outbreaks of respiratory viruses in the province, with the ability to view data by key stratifiers, as well as filter the data.



This tab contains seven sections:

Overall

This section contains a bar and line graph displaying the number of outbreaks and outbreak-associated cases by week. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), disease (COVID-19, influenza A, influenza B, entero/rhinovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, other, more than one, none detected), and time period.

Disease

This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (outbreaks or outbreak-associated cases), allowing users to compare trends for the selected diseases. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), disease (COVID-19, influenza A, influenza B, entero/rhinovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, other, more than one, none detected), and time period. Filtering by more than one disease will add lines to the graph for the selected diseases.

Respiratory Season

This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (outbreaks or outbreak-associated cases) over different respiratory seasons, allowing users to compare seasonal differences in the data. Users can filter the data by public health unit (Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), disease (COVID-19, influenza A, influenza B, entero/rhinovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, other, more than one, none detected), and time period. Filtering by more than one respiratory season will add lines to the graph for the selected respiratory season. This section also has a button which will switch the view to display a bar graph showing the distribution by respiratory season for the selected time period.

Public Health Unit

This section contains a multi-line graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (outbreaks or outbreak-associated cases), allowing users to compare trends by public health unit. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), disease (COVID-19, influenza A, influenza B, entero/rhinovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, other, more than one, none detected), and time period. Filtering by more than one public health unit will add lines to the graph for the selected public health units (by default only the provincial line is selected). This section also has a button which will switch the view to display a bar graph showing the distribution by public health unit for the selected time period.

Setting

This section contains a stacked bar graph displaying weekly trends for the selected measure (outbreaks or outbreak-associated cases), allowing users to compare trends by setting. Users can filter the data by public health unit (Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), disease (COVID-19, influenza A, influenza B, entero/rhinovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, other, more than one, none detected), setting (congregate care [long-term care homes, hospitals, retirement homes], congregate living [group home/supportive housing, correctional facility, shelter], other, unknown), and time period. Filtering by more than one setting will add bars to the graph for the selected settings. This section also has a button which will switch the view to display a bar graph showing the distribution setting for the selected time period.

Severity

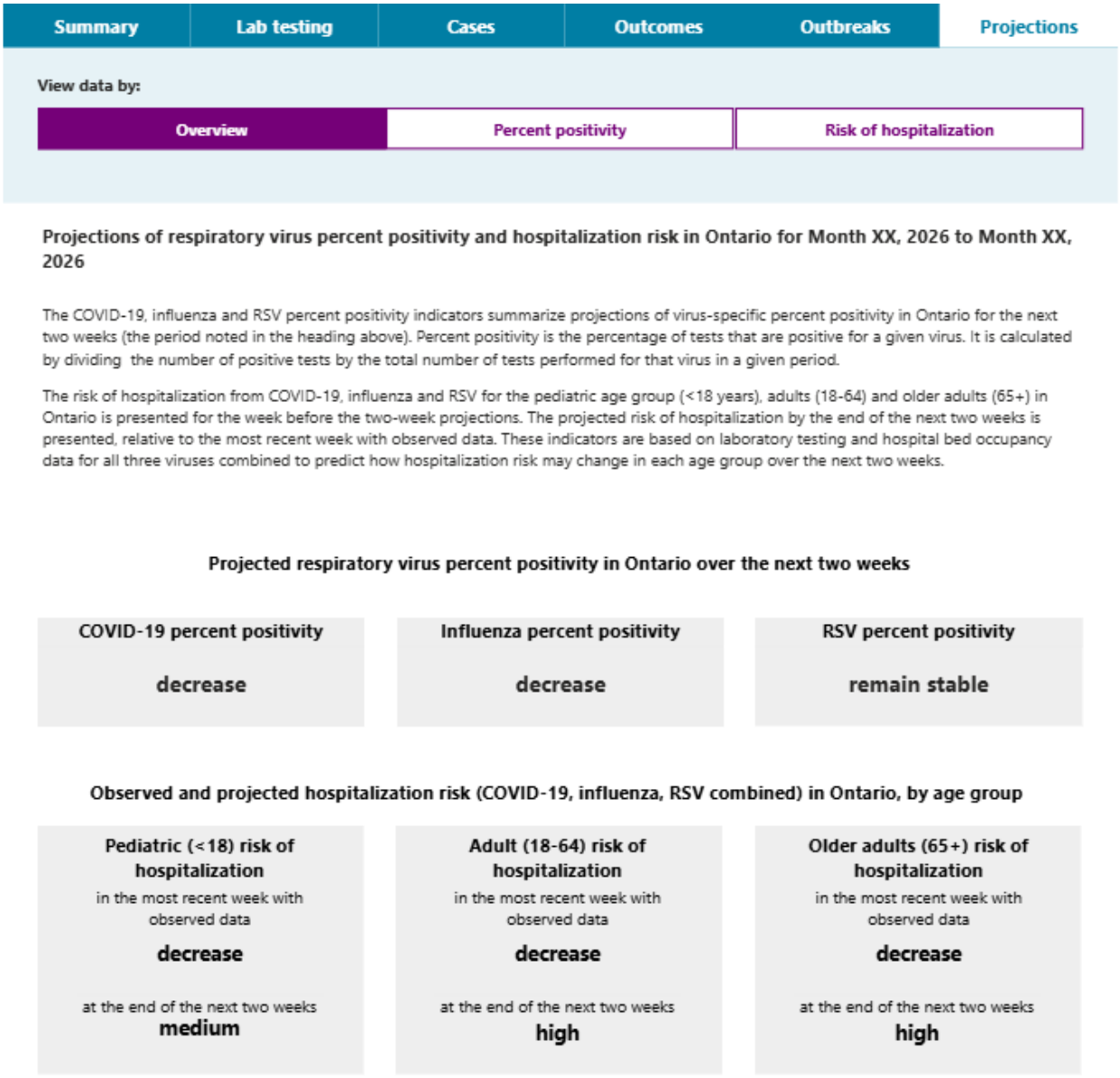
This section contains both a stacked bar chart comparing counts of outbreak-associated severity measures (cases, hospitalizations, deaths) by disease and role (residents/patients or staff) as well as box plots displaying information on the distribution of the rates of outbreak-associated severity measures (cases, hospitalizations, deaths) by disease in a given respiratory season. Users can filter the data by public health unit (Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), disease (COVID-19, influenza A, influenza B, entero/rhinovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, other, more than one, none detected), setting (long-term care homes, hospitals, retirement homes), and role (residents/patients or staff). A table below the distribution figures displays the data being used for the box plot for the counts, number of outbreaks, minimum, 25th percentile, median, 75th percentile, and maximum values.

Data Tables

This section allows the user to build a table with outbreak data which can be exported. Users can filter the data by public health unit (province of Ontario or one of the 29 PHUs in the province), disease (COVID-19, influenza A, influenza B, entero/rhinovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, other, more than one, none detected), and time period. This section has a filter which allows the user to add surveillance week, setting category (congregate care, congregate living, other/unknown), and setting (congregate care [long-term care homes, hospitals, retirement homes], congregate living [group home/supportive housing, correctional facility, shelter], other/unknown [other, unknown]) to the table.

Projections Tab

This tab contains information on projected activity and risk of hospitalization from respiratory viruses in the province, with the ability to view data by virus and age group, and the ability to adjust the time period shown. Projections data are only available at the provincial level.



This tab contains three sections:

Overview

This section contains projections of respiratory virus activity for COVID-19, influenza, and RSV over the next two weeks, as well as risk of hospitalization for the three viruses combined in the most recent assessment period, and the change predicted for that risk over the next two weeks.

Percent Positivity

This section contains a multi-line graph showing historic and projected percent positivity in the province. The graph shows lines for the historical data, dots for the observed positivity in the current season (with a complementary smoothed line), and the projected positivity in the next two weeks (NOWCAST). Users can filter the data by virus (SARS-CoV-2, influenza by subtype (all types, influenza A, influenza B), and RSV), and age group (all ages, pediatric (<18), adult (18-64), older adult (65+). Users can also filter the past respiratory seasons for comparison to appear on the graph.

Risk of Hospitalization

This section contains a bar graph showing estimated weekly risk of hospitalization in the province for SARS-CoV-2, influenza, and RSV combined. The relative risk of hospitalization is indicators by the colour of the bars in the graph, but also by hovering over any of the bars. The two rightmost bars indicate the projected risk in the next two weeks, along with the associated confidence intervals around those estimates. Users can filter the data by age group (all ages, pediatric (<18), adult (18-64), older adult (65+) and time period.

Citation

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). User guide: Ontario respiratory virus tool. Toronto, ON: King's Printer for Ontario; 2026.

Disclaimer

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Public Health Ontario

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For more information about PHO, visit publichealthontario.ca.

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