

October 13, 2023

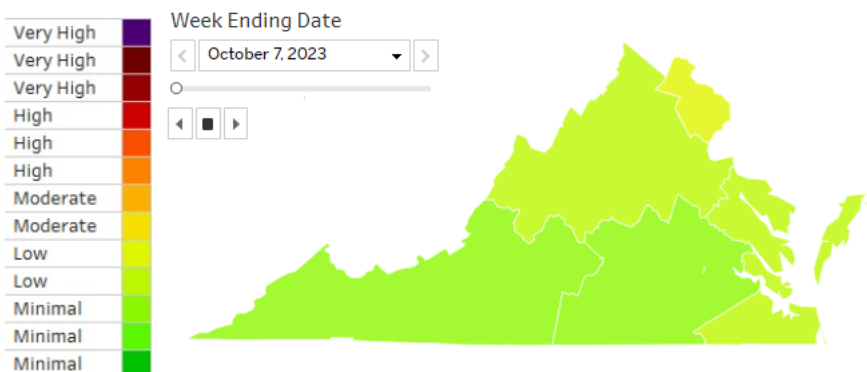
Key Takeaways

- COVID-19 indicators suggest a decline in activity. The percentage of weekly Virginia emergency visits with diagnosed COVID-19 declined by 22.2%, while hospital admissions decreased by 7.3%. CDC forecasts suggest a plateau in the coming weeks.
- RSV continues to increase in the Southeast and South U.S., suggesting a potential early start to the season.
- Flu activity is rated as minimal statewide, but three of Virginia’s five regions are now at low activity levels.
- Wildfire season begins in Virginia on October 15 and ends on November 30. Currently, wildfire risk is classified as low in all regions of Virginia.
- With migratory bird season peaking, avian flu has been detected in just six US poultry flocks in the past 30 days, well below levels seen last fall. Most detections occurred in the Midwest.
- Kaiser Permanente reached a tentative deal with a worker’s union, averting another strike planned for early November. Kaiser Permanente workers went on strike from Oct 4 to Oct 6 with little reported impact in the DC area.

Key Figure

Regional Flu Activity Levels

Intensity Level by Region, Week ending October 7, 2023



Source : [VDH](#).

COVID-19

1.8%

Chance that the WHO will identify a new COVID-19 Variant of Concern in 2023. (Metaculus [forecast](#))

Low

Characterization of COVID-19 hospital admissions and hospital occupancy in Virginia.

Influenza

Minimal

Statewide influenza activity levels in Virginia, as of Oct. 7.

3 of 5

Virginia regions with Low influenza activity levels, as of Oct. 7.

Spotlight:
Avian Flu

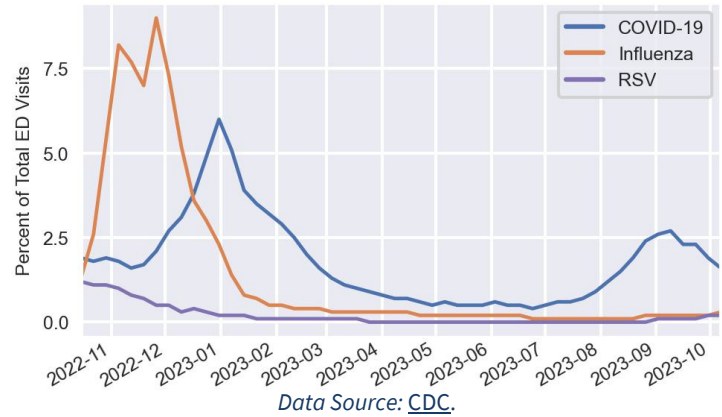
Forecasts are italicized

Respiratory Illness

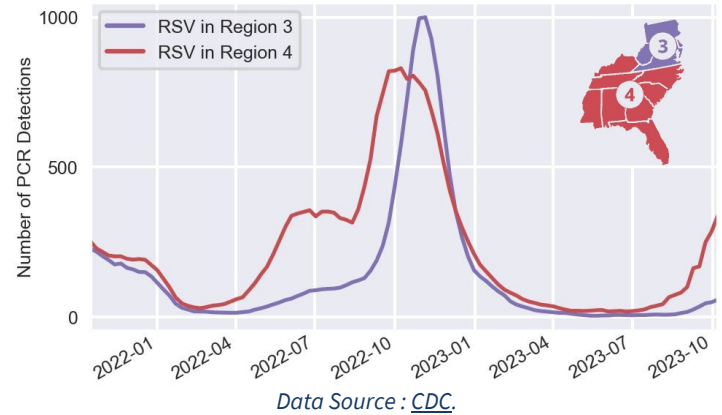
- **COVID-19 indicators continue to decline.** The percentage of emergency department (ED) visits for diagnosed COVID-19 has fallen to 1.4% from the seasonal peak of 2.48% in early September. The number of COVID-Like Illness visits to EDs has also declined to 8.4% from a peak of 9.9%.
- **After weeks of plateau, weekly admissions have fallen for two weeks in a row.** They are now down to 4.76 per 100k from a peak of 5.55 per 100k. Despite this, models suggest that admissions could remain in this plateau into November. Bed occupancy, which typically lags hospital admissions by two weeks, has plateaued since last week.
- **RSV detections in HHS Region 3 (including Virginia) have doubled since early September,** though overall RSV rates remain low. RSV rates are climbing quickly in HHS Region 4 (the southeastern states). In 2022, Region 4's RSV season preceded Virginia's by about a month.
- **About 4 million Americans received the updated COVID-19 vaccine in September,** despite reports of distribution issues. Nearly 300,000 Virginians have received the updated vaccine.
- **Statewide flu activity is minimal.** However, three regions in the Commonwealth are at low activity levels: Northern, Northwest, and Eastern.

Percent of Virginia ED Visits with Diagnosis

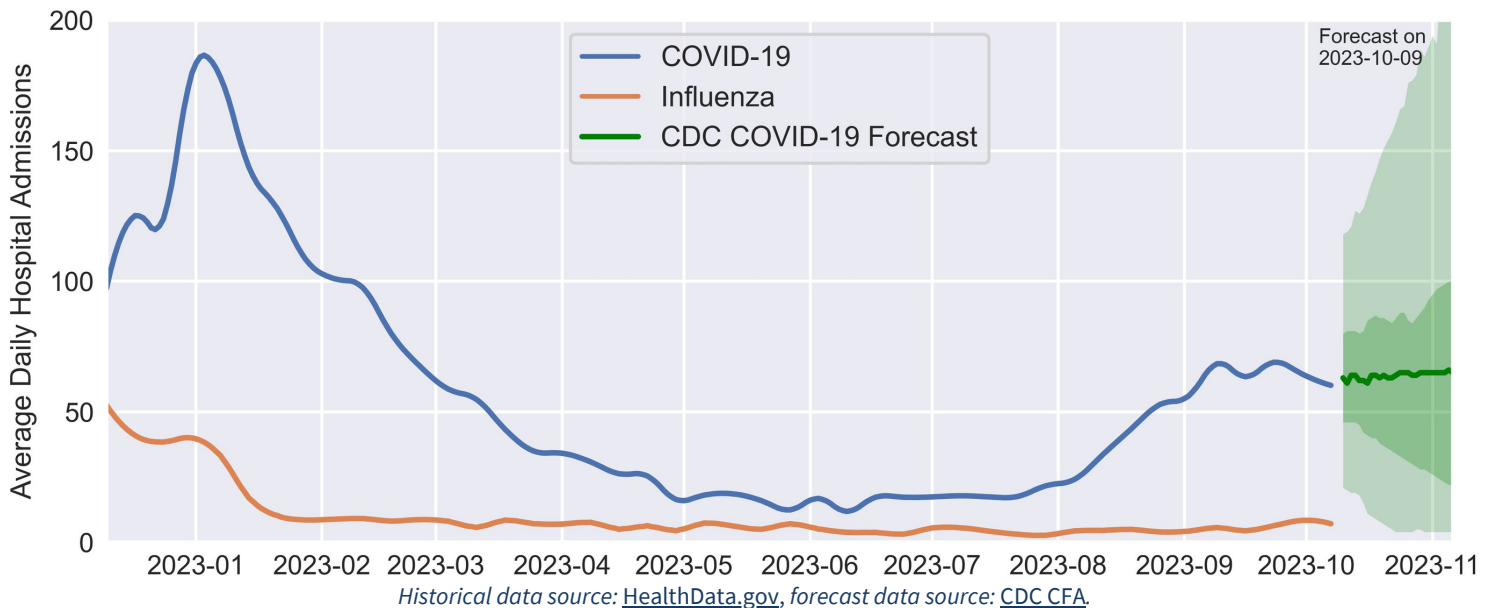
Virginia Respiratory Virus Activity



RSV PCR Detections in Region 3 (VA) and 4 (Southeast)



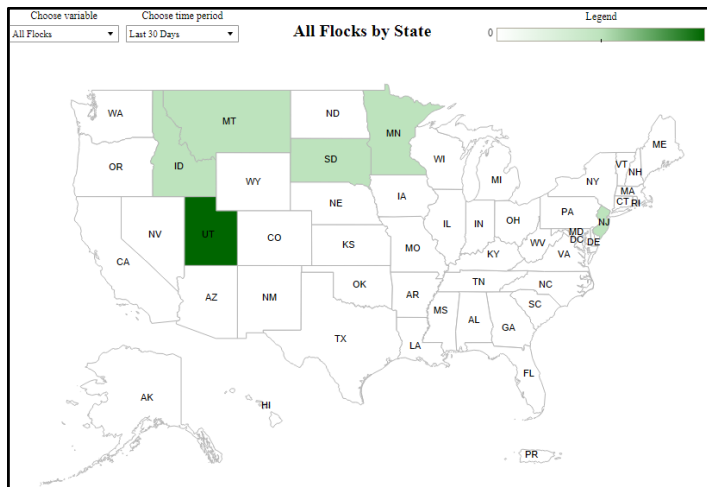
Virginia COVID-19 Hospital Admissions and Forecast



Spotlight

- **Seven poultry flocks in 6 states have confirmed avian flu detections within the last 30 days.** With the fall migratory bird season in full swing, avian flu has affected flocks in five midwestern states and New Jersey, affecting 380,000 birds. However, detections remain well below levels seen last year.
- **Washington continues to mitigate avian flu in the Puget sound.** After avian flu was detected in five deceased harbor seals in September, officials began collecting carcasses of dead sea birds. Current evidence suggests avian flu is spreading from birds to seals, with no evidence of spread between seals.
- **The CDC notes that the current risk to the public from avian flu remains low.** The strain causing the current global outbreak HPAI A(H5N1) lacks features that would allow it to infect humans efficiently, though persons exposed to poultry or infected birds are at increased risk. Additionally, influenza viruses can evolve rapidly, and continued vigilance is warranted.

Avian Flu



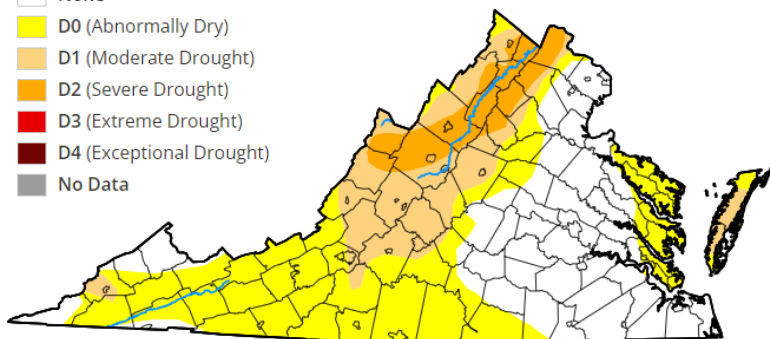
Avian flu detections in American poultry flocks, including commercial and backyard flocks, within the past 30 days. Image source: [USDA](#)

- **Cambodia experienced two avian flu deaths in the past week,** bringing the total to three this year. Prior to 2023, Cambodia had not experienced an avian flu death since 2014.

Other News

Intensity

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data



After a wet summer, some areas of Virginia have begun to experience drought conditions, including severe drought in portions of Northwest Virginia. Image Source: [US Drought Monitor](#).

- **Wildfire season in Virginia begins October 15.** The season lasts to November 30. Currently, there are no wildfires reported in the state, and all areas are at low fire risk.
- **Areas near Dayton Ohio are experiencing an uptick in whooping cough cases.** The 27 cases reported thus far in 2023 are double the number seen in 2022, but lower than pre-pandemic levels.
- **A cyberattack impacted three Connecticut hospitals over 6-weeks in August & September.** Impacts included cancellation of elective procedures and emergency department diversion. State officials considered activating the medical reserve corps due to staffing issues related to the attack.