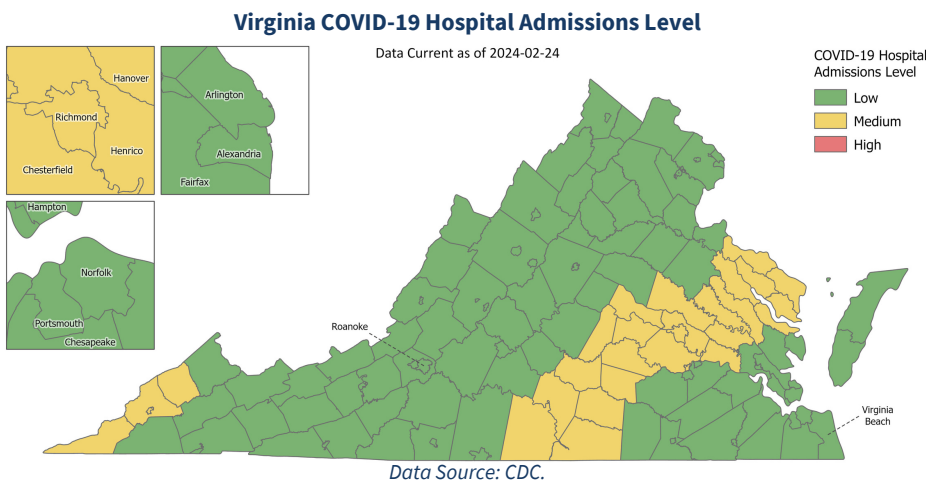
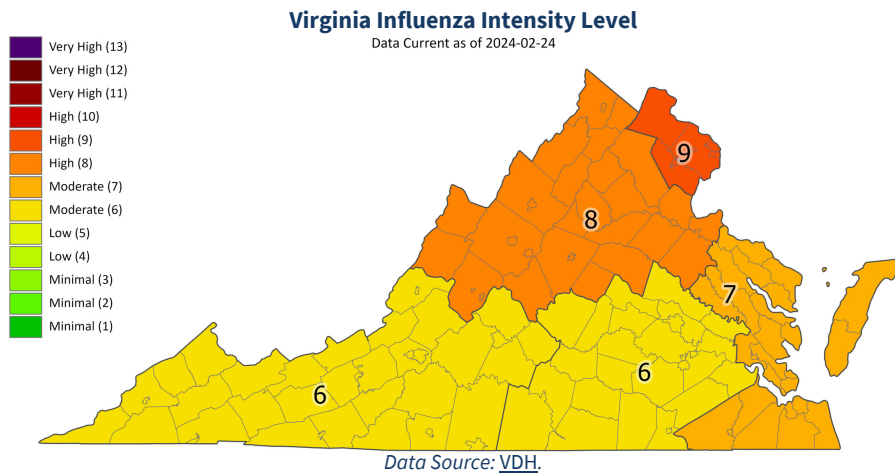


March 1, 2024

Key Takeaways

- Please complete this [short survey](#) to help us assess and improve the value and usefulness of this update. Thank you!
- COVID-19 rates continue to decrease slowly but remain elevated. Related hospitalizations are down again this week. Models expect COVID-19 hospital admissions to stabilize in the coming weeks.
- Influenza rates have increased slightly over the last few weeks. Flu related hospitalizations are also up. Models suggest flu hospitalizations will remain steady through March.
- Norovirus rates are elevated across the United States. Outbreaks of gastrointestinal disease have also been reported nationwide, including at Liberty University.
- Virginia’s presidential primary elections will be held on March 5, with three candidate events occurring in the run up to the vote. Concerns of election-related violence or disruptions are elevated this cycle.

Key Figures



COVID-19

Low / Low

Characterization of statewide COVID-19 related hospital admissions / hospital bed occupancy as of Feb 24.

0% / 17%

Population in localities with “High” / “Medium” COVID-19 hospital admissions levels as of Feb 24.

Influenza

High

Statewide influenza activity levels in Virginia, as of Feb 24.

2

Virginia regions with High influenza intensity levels, as of Feb 24.

Norovirus

296

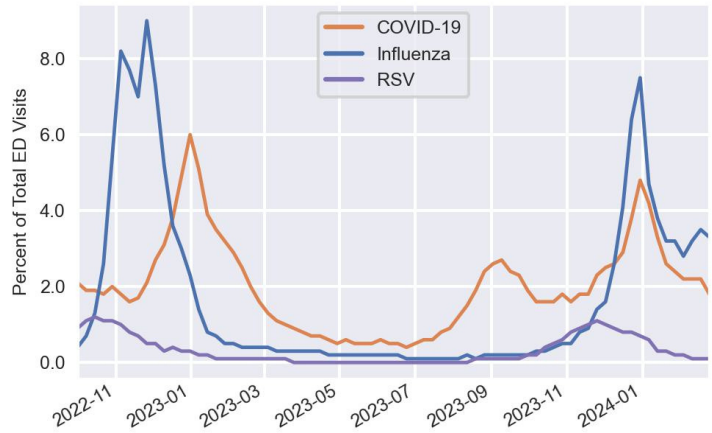
The number of Suspected and Confirmed Norovirus Outbreaks Reported by States in the [CDC NoroSTAT](#) program since Jan 1, 2024.

Spotlight: Virginia Primary Elections

Seasonal Illness

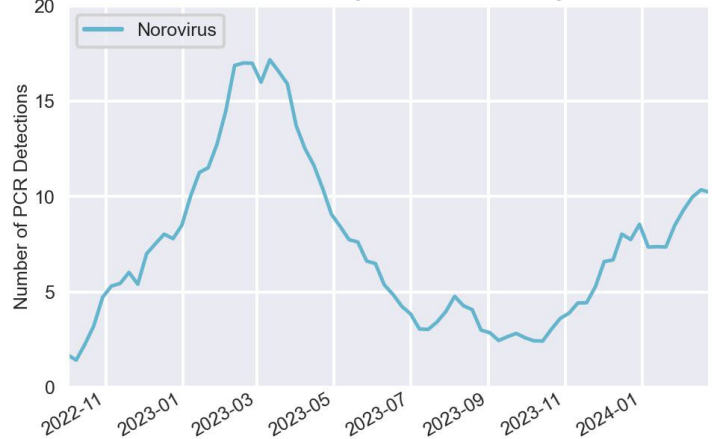
- **Influenza activity is stable.** Emergency Department (ED) diagnoses of influenza in Virginia have stabilized after increasing for two weeks. The statewide [flu intensity level](#) is still high, as it is in two of the five regions of the Commonwealth.
- **COVID-19 activity continues to decrease slowly.** Aside from a few weeks of rapid decline in January, COVID-19 activity has been on a slow steady decline since peaking in December. Down by 7% since last week, [ED diagnoses rates](#) are now at their lowest since November. CDC [wastewater data](#) also suggest a decline, but overall activity is still “Very High”.
- **Hospital admissions increase for flu and decrease for COVID-19.** Aside from a small bump last week, COVID-19 hospital admissions have fallen steadily since December. Conversely, flu related hospital admissions have increased two weeks in a row. CDC models suggest that hospital admissions will remain stable near current levels for the next few weeks.
- **Norovirus rates increase nationally.** PCR detections of the virus are elevated in [all four US census regions](#). Region 1, including Virginia, has the highest detection rate since last April.
- **Liberty University experienced a gastrointestinal disease outbreak,** affecting 560 students at its peak. Cases have decreased rapidly this week.

Weekly Percent of ED Visits in Virginia by Viral Illness



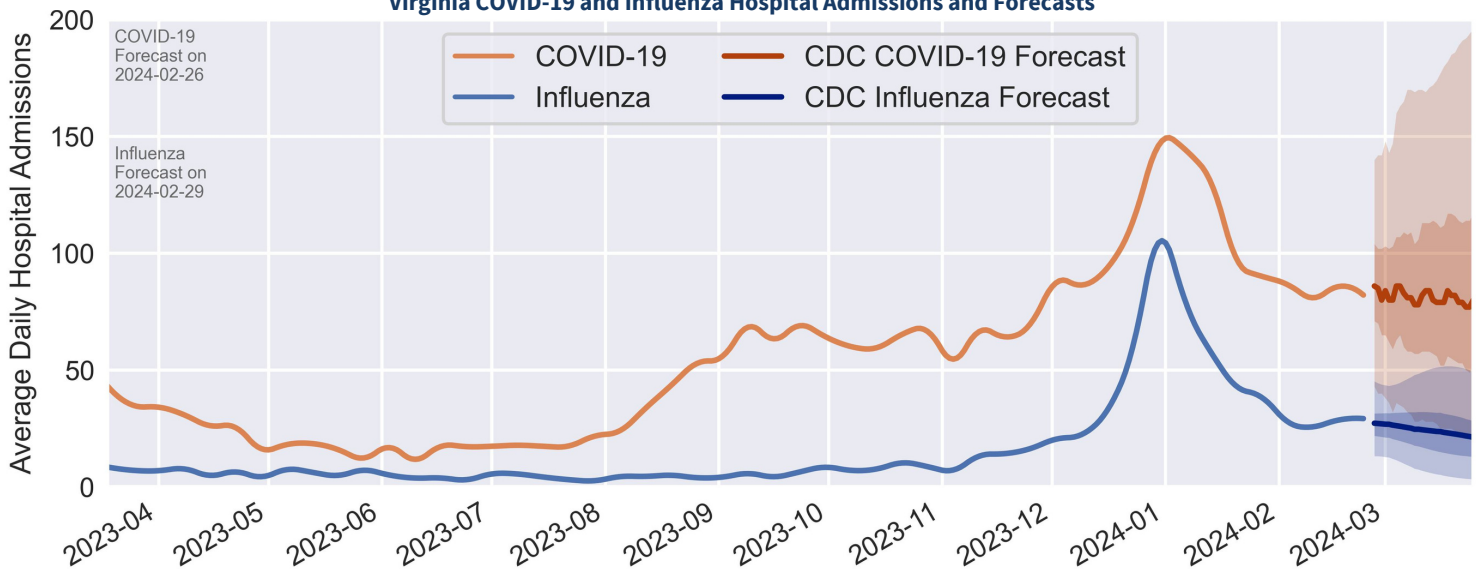
Data Source: [CDC](#).

Norovirus in Census Region 1 (includes Virginia)



Data Source: [CDC](#).

Virginia COVID-19 and Influenza Hospital Admissions and Forecasts



Models suggest a stabilization of hospitalizations for both flu and COVID-19. Note, 50% and 95% forecast confidence intervals are shown as shading. Historical data source: [HealthData.gov](#), COVID-19 forecast data source: [CDC CFA](#), flu forecast data source: [CDC FluSight](#).

Spotlight

Virginia Primary Elections

- **Virginia presidential primary elections will take place March 5**, along with 14 other states and American Samoa on ‘Super Tuesday’. Two primary candidates scheduled events in Virginia ahead of the primary. Candidate Haley held events Thursday in both Richmond and Falls Church, while candidate Trump has an event scheduled Saturday evening in Richmond.
- **The 2024 election cycle is a key event for possible violence** and foreign influence campaigns, according the 2024 Homeland Threat Assessment from the US Dept. of Homeland Security. The assessment notes disruptions by domestic extremists, influence campaigns, and cyberattacks on infrastructure as converging threats.

**Abuse Reported
 by State Legislators**

DURING CURRENT TERM AND THE PRECEDING CAMPAIGN

Insults	86%
Harassment	43%
Threats	43%
Attacks	4%

**Abuse Reported
 by Local Officeholders**

OVER PREVIOUS THREE MONTHS

Insults	49%
Harassment	36%
Threats	18%
Attacks	1%

*In fall 2023 surveys, 43% of state legislators and 18% of local officials reported experiencing threats. Data from the US Marshals Service reveals that threats against federal judges have nearly doubled from FY 2021 to FY 2023, while threats against prosecutors more than doubled. US Capitol Police threat assessment cases climbed 54% compared to 2018, though they recorded fewer cases than in both 2020 and 2021.
 Image Source: Brennan Center for Justice*

Other News

- **Florida measles outbreak expands to nine cases in Broward county, with an additional case in Polk county.** Florida’s surgeon general issued a letter that noted, but made recommendations not in line with, CDC guidance for the response, leading to concerns that the outbreak could expand further.
- **Cyberattack impacts Change Healthcare Solutions, disrupting electronic payment and prescription processing** at a large share of the nations health systems. Some providers are reporting a cash crunch due to the inability to process payments. Company executives suggested the outage could last weeks.
- **European Medicines Agency recommends approval for two human H5N1 avian flu vaccines.** One vaccine is intended for use during outbreaks, while the other is intended for pandemic response.
- **Texas Department of Health Services issues health advisory** due to an increase in invasive meningococcal disease. The increase began November 2023.
- **Multiple wildfires in Texas affect over 1 million acres in the Panhandle region causing one fatality.** The Smokehouse Creek Fire, affection over 1 million acres on its own, has become the largest in state history. The fires are affecting regional air quality, but are not expected to affect Virginia in the coming days.
- **Tornado outbreak hits the Great Lakes states following unseasonably high temperatures and severe weather.** Although tornadoes are rare during this time of the year, almost two dozen confirmed or suspected tornadoes impacted Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio this week, resulting in significant damage and power outages across these states.