

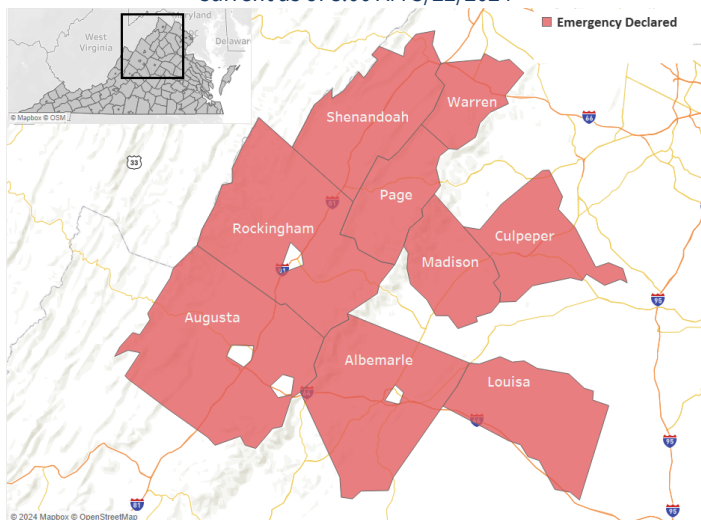
March 22, 2024

Key Takeaways

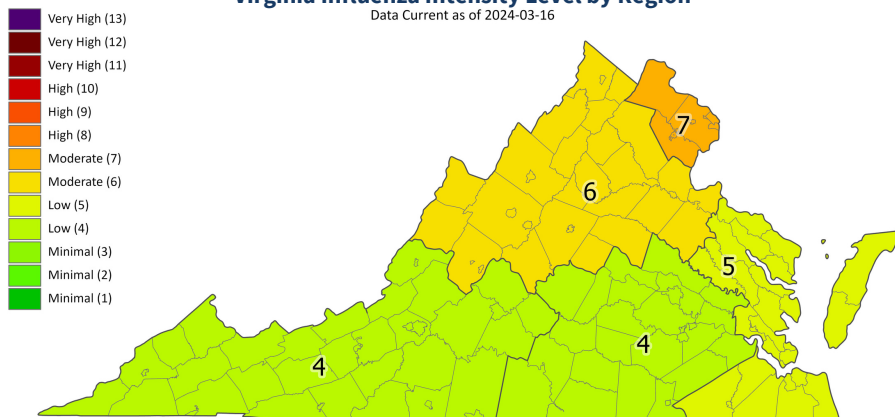
- Influenza activity has fallen substantially. The Commonwealth now reports a ‘low’ statewide flu intensity level. No regions report higher than ‘moderate’ flu intensity.
- COVID-19 rates continue to decrease. Wastewater data suggest that viral activity is elevated, but levels have declined for three successive weeks.
- Combined hospitalizations for respiratory illness have decreased and are now at levels comparable to those of early November 2023.
- Norovirus activity may be stabilizing in the region.
- Several Virginia localities declared states of local emergency due to wildfires and high winds. Fire weather is expected to diminish over the weekend before increasing again on Sunday.

Key Figures

State of Local Emergency Declarations
Due to Wildfires and High Wind
Current as of 8:00 AM 3/22/2024



Virginia Influenza Intensity Level by Region
Data Current as of 2024-03-16



Data Source: [VDH](#).

COVID-19

Low / Low

Characterization of statewide COVID-19 related hospital admissions / hospital bed occupancy as of Mar 16.

Influenza

Low

Statewide influenza activity levels in Virginia, as of Mar 16.

0

Virginia regions with High influenza intensity levels, as of Mar 16.

Wildfires

9

Number of Virginia counties that declared a State of Local Emergency due to wildfires and strong winds.

Measles

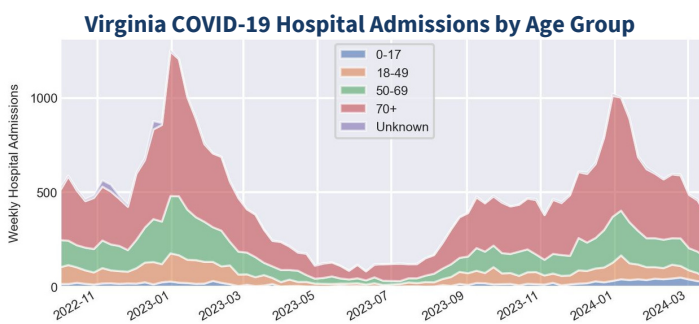
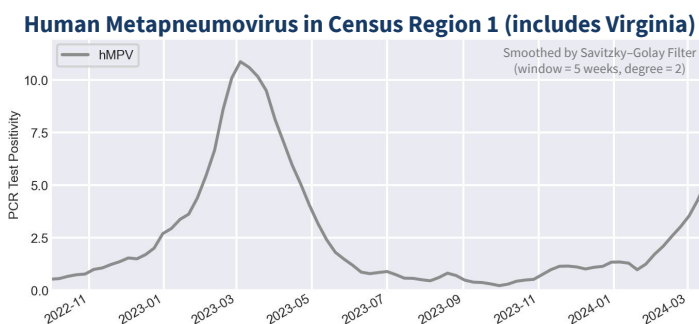
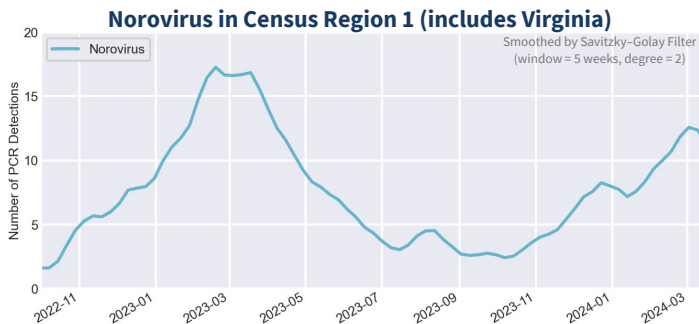
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The number of measles cases reported to the CDC in 2024 as of Mar 14.

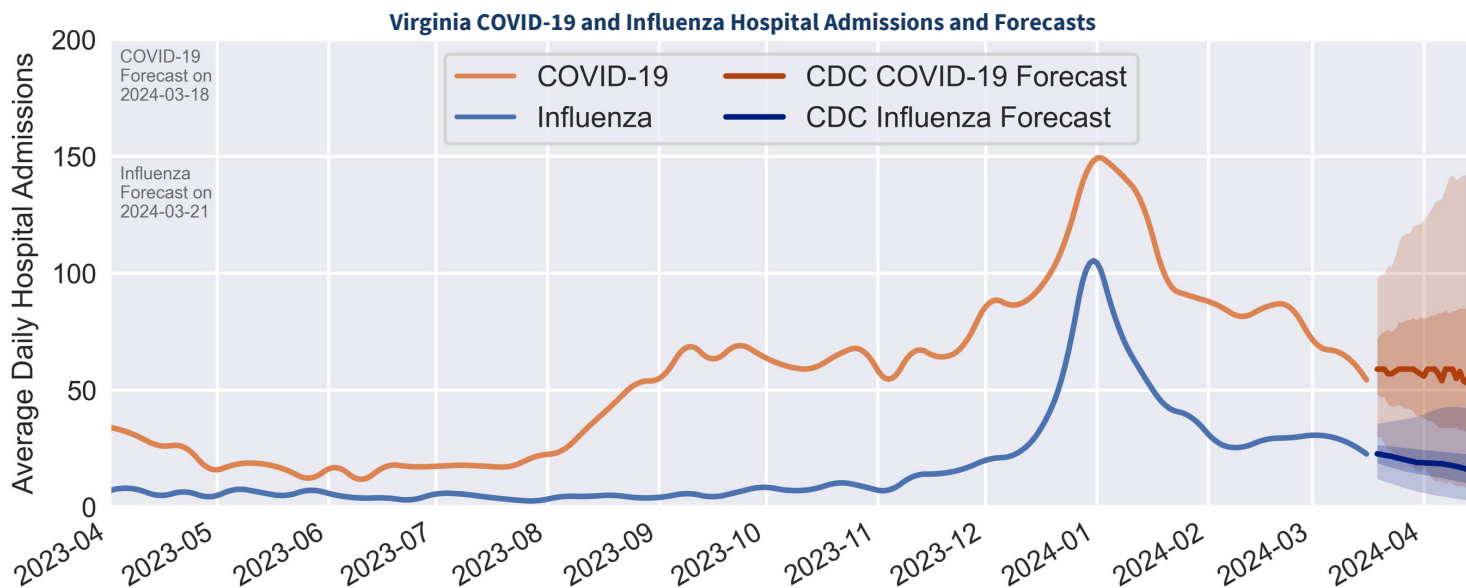
Spotlight:
Wildfires

Seasonal Illness

- **Norovirus activity may stabilize.** Detections of the virus in Census Region 1 (inc. Virginia) have declined for two weeks in a row, though rates remain elevated.
- **Human Metapneumovirus increasing in the region.** Test positivity of hMPV in Census Region 1 has grown steadily since January. In 2023 rates peaked in March.
- **Influenza activity decreasing statewide.** For the first time since early December, the statewide flu intensity level is ‘low’. All five regions also report a reduction in flu intensity from last week; none report ‘high’ intensity levels. Emergency Department (ED) and Urgent Care (UC) diagnoses of flu in Virginia are down by 16%, continuing a two week trend.
- **COVID-19 activity continues decreasing steadily.** ED diagnoses rates have declined for six weeks in a row and are now below 1.0% for the first time since July of 2023. Though CDC wastewater data suggest viral activity is still ‘high’, viral activity has decreased substantially in the last two weeks.
- **Hospitalizations caused by respiratory illnesses decrease.** Admissions rates for COVID-19 and flu are down this week by 17% and 21% respectively. Combined hospital admissions are now at the lowest level seen since early November. Models continue to forecast a stabilization of admissions rates into April. Adults over 70 continue to make up the majority of patients admitted to the hospital for COVID-19.



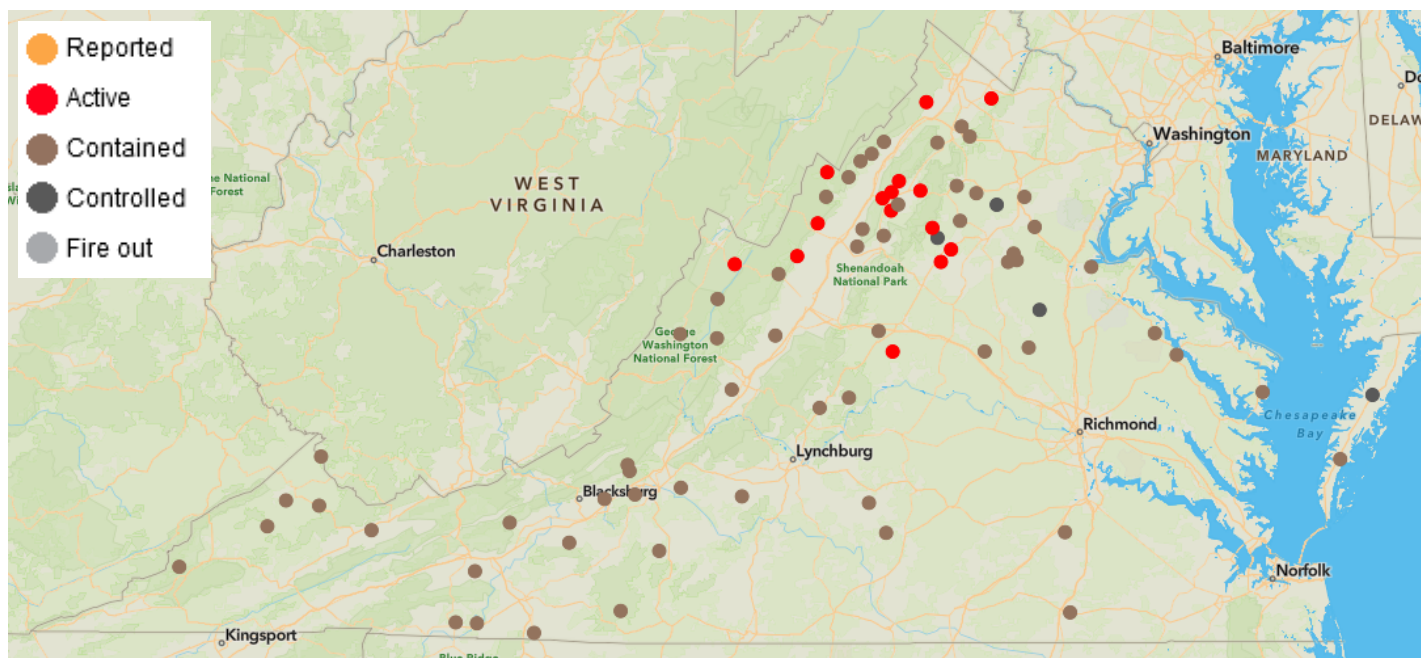
Data Sources: Top CDC NREVSS, Center CDC NREVSS, Bottom HHS.



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](https://www.healthdata.gov), COVID-19 forecast data source: [CDC CFA](https://www.cdc.gov/cfa/), flu forecast data source: [CDC FluSight](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/sight/).

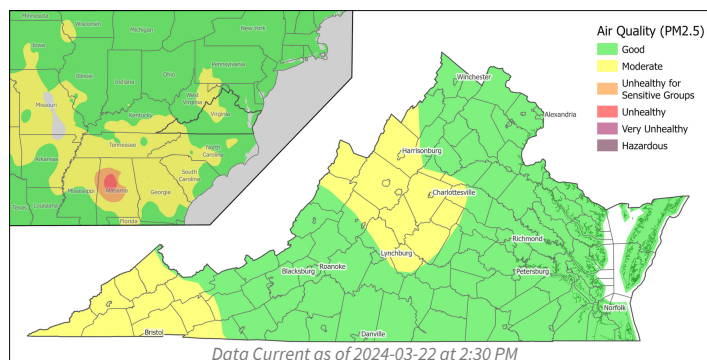
Spotlight

Wildfire Risks



Wildfires continue to occur throughout Virginia. Fire crews have contained, controlled or extinguished most of the blazes but many remain active. Image Source: [Virginia Department of Forestry](#).

- **Nine Virginia localities declared a state of local emergency due to wildfires and strong winds.** (See [map page 1](#)). Although smaller than those seen last fall, [scores of wildfires](#) have occurred across Virginia, prompting school closures and local evacuations.
- **Rain is expected to improve conditions this evening through tomorrow morning**, reducing fire risk and improving air quality. However, [fire weather](#) is expected to increase Sunday and last through Wednesday. Smoke from regional wildfires may also impact Virginia over the coming days.



Wildfire smoke outlooks were issued for several Virginia towns, centered on Rockingham, Charlottesville, and Shenandoah National Park, where the Air Quality Index reached unhealthy levels at times Thursday and Friday. Smoke also affected visibility on roadways, including parts of Interstate 81. Data Source: [EPA](#)

Other News

- **The Republic of Congo (ROC) recorded its first cases of mpox** across several regions. Neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been dealing with a [record number](#) mpox cases, including cases in areas where mpox had not been observed previously.
- **The WHO rated the regional risk from a rise in yellow fever cases in parts of Africa as moderate.** Although the global risk is low, the potential of onward transmission from travelers exists.
- **The Pan American Health Organization has rated the regional risk from carbapenemase-resistant hypervirulent *Klebsiella pneumoniae* (hvKp) in the Americas as moderate**, noting an increase of cases in Europe and genomic identification of the strain in the Americas. Last month, the European CDC issued its own [risk assessment](#), noting the probability of further spread and establishment in healthcare settings is high.